YOUR TOWNS & CITIES IN THE GREAT WAR

READING IN THE GREAT WAR

1917 ~ 1919

DAVID BILTON

Reading
in the Great War
1917–1919

Your Towns and Cities in the Great War

Reading in the Great War 1917–1919

David Bilton

Pen & Sword
MILITARY

First published in Great Britain in 2016 by
PEN & SWORD MILITARY
an imprint of
Pen and Sword Books Ltd
47 Church Street
Barnsley
South Yorkshire S70 2AS

Copyright © David Bilton, 2016

ISBN 978 1 47385 427 7

The right of David Bilton to be identified as the author of
this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright,
Designs and Patents Act 1988.

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted
in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical including
photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval
system, without permission from the Publisher in writing.

Printed and bound in England
by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

Typeset in Times New Roman by Chic Graphics

Pen & Sword Books Ltd incorporates the imprints of
Pen & Sword Archaeology, Atlas, Aviation, Battleground, Discovery,
Family History, History, Maritime, Military, Naval, Politics, Railways,
Select, Social History, Transport, True Crime, Claymore Press,
Frontline Books, Leo Cooper, Praetorian Press, Remember When,
Seaforth Publishing and Wharncliffe.

For a complete list of Pen and Sword titles please contact
Pen and Sword Books Limited
47 Church Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2AS, England
E-mail: enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk
Website: www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

Contents

	Acknowledgements	6
	Introduction	7
1	1917 – Seeing it Through	18
2	1918 – The Final Blows	84
3	1919 – The Homecoming	152
	Day-by-Day Chronology	
	1917	188
	1918	195
	1919	201
	Casualty List 1914–1919	202
	Bibliography	215
	Index	217

Acknowledgements

As with previous books, a great big thank you to Anne Coulson for her help in checking the text and to the staff of Reading Central Library for their help, kindness and knowledge during the gestation of this book. While many of the illustrations are from contemporary newspapers I am very grateful to Mike Armitage, Julie Cox, Andrew French of the Berkshire Yeomanry Museum, Maurice Johnson, Mike Paul, Liz Tait and Richard van Emden for providing further information and photographs. Errors of omission or commission are mine alone.

Introduction

This book is about Reading, though it is difficult to say exactly what Reading encompasses. As a borough council it comprised Reading, Caversham, Coley, parts of Earley, Southcote, Tilehurst and Whitley, but as the county town of Berkshire its influence and importance spread across the whole county. I have therefore occasionally included the immediate outlying towns and villages to provide a flavour of life in both urban and rural Berkshire during the war. Keen-eyed readers will no doubt see many similarities between then and now and between any of the war years and conclude that in reality only relatively trivial matters change. Life is, after all, life. And some careful readers may well discover that what was presented in wartime as definite fact was not actually so. *Caveat, lector.*

Berkshire, is the Royal County; had a royal regiment and the monarch's official residence is Windsor. However, this title was not official until 1957, though it had been in widespread use for about thirty years when the Great War started. Regardless of officialdom, all the residents had felt themselves to be living in the Royal County since Victorian times.

Berkshire was, and still is, especially in the west, a predominantly agricultural county with some industry in the towns. Reading was traditionally famous for its 3 Bs: biscuits (Huntley and Palmers), beer (Simonds) and bulbs (Suttons seeds), but there were really 5 Bs, with the inclusion of boxes (Huntley, Bourne and Stevens) and bricks (Colliers). Of these the biggest employer was Huntley and Palmers. More than 5,000 people were employed by them; their annual holiday excursion resulted in all Reading schools closing because so few children were not part of it.

In the rural west, farm labourers and servants were still hired at the

Michaelmas hiring fair, but, in the towns, labour moved more freely and there were often disputes between employers and employees. The traditional craftsmen would have been surprised to know that they, as well as those in agriculture, unknown to them, would play a part in the war effort. Osier (willow) rods were used to make basket shell containers and invalid chairs. To replace shaving brush handles previously obtained from Germany, the Turnery Works in Thatcham supplied thousands while another firm made mop handles for the navy.

Reading also proudly boasted a University College, at which Wilfred Owen studied while he was working in Dunsden Green, and one of the oldest boys' schools in the country, both of which would provide numbers of officers for the New Armies. As well as hosting and training many thousands of troops from across the country, the town was also home to two Royal Flying Corps Units. 'Two fields in Coley Park were used as an airfield for the Royal Flying Corps' No.1 School of Military Aeronautics and No.1 School of Technical Training, based nearby. However, flying was disrupted by river fogs and by the end of the war the airfield fell into disuse.'

Reading was and still is an important part of the nation's transport system. It was a major staging point on the old Bath Road (A4) from London to Bath and Bristol; it is on two navigable rivers, the Kennet and Thames, and was a major railway town. The central station on the Great Western mainline doubled as the terminus for the London and South Western and the South Eastern Railway. It was therefore easily accessible from most other important towns and cities in the south and midlands.

Reading produced four newspapers, all weeklies – the *Chronicle*, the *Observer*, the *Mercury* and the *Standard*, each with its own style. The bestselling paper was the *Chronicle* which provided a front page of small ads, followed by local articles with some pictures, and a leader about current affairs. The *Standard* was shorter and provided a mix of photographs and stories, the *Observer* and the *Mercury* were very traditional and purely text. This book has based its text on the contemporary articles in these papers.

How had Reading fared in twenty-nine months of war? Really quite well. Employment had risen as had wages. Food was available if the consumer had the money. Crime had fallen, as had drunkenness and health was better. It had been hard at first but when war contracts

started to arrive there was plenty of work. Certainly there had been worker unrest but nothing major or damaging to the war effort.

Initially Reading and district had responded well to Kitchener's appeal with the Berkshire Regiment raising eight battalions, mostly of local men. Between 4 August and 31 December, 3,700 men from Berkshire had enlisted and were in training. Some 3,655 had volunteered and were waiting to be called. However, by 1915 the numbers volunteering had fallen. One obvious reason was the money that could be earned because of the war contracts. Even with the potential threat of conscription there was no hurry to join up, just an eventual rush, when the deadline for voluntary enlistment approached, to offer their services when needed, in the hope they never would be. Many did not even bother to register under the Derby scheme preferring to take their chance and hope they would not get called. A considerable number of these men had a trump card, they were in certified occupations and unlikely to be taken even if called up.

On the financial side of the war, Reading was known as a very generous town and with the money from the rest of Berkshire often collected more than areas with many times the population. Even beating the contributions of Scotland in one collection.

As it so often does, it suffered badly with the weather over the winter of 1914. It rained or snowed on twenty-three days during December 1914. The worst weather came on Monday 24th, when it rained heavily from midday into the evening. The wind then blew with hurricane force, and for two hours a violent snowstorm raged, ending very suddenly. The wind caused great damage. On the London Road near Shepherds Hill House, an uprooted tree delayed traffic. A chimney stack was blown through the roof of a business house in town, happily without causing injury. The snow melted and the Kennet, Loddon and Thames rivers flooded thousands of acres and Caversham Meadows and the biscuit factory recreation ground disappeared. Roads were submerged; some, like Church Lane in Shinfield, and parts of Arborfield Road and Three Mile Cross became impassable.

The bad weather continued into the New Year. The first week of January saw the worst floods since the great flood of 1894. Parts of the town flooded: Great Knollys, Cow Lane and Vastern Road. Water engulfed houses, forcing people upstairs, taking their livestock with them. In some parts, the floods extended a mile from the rivers Kennet

and Loddon. Farmhouses were cut off, and crops affected; agriculture was badly hit.

The *Chronicle* summed up the year in its leader of 28 December. 'The year 1914 will stand in our annals as a year of ordeal. As such it passes into history unwept but not unhonoured.' But more men were still needed to secure victory. The great resolution for the New Year was 'I will be a man and enlist to-day.'

The feature writer of the *Chronicle* summed up the past and future.

> 'We stand at the beginning of the New Year. The year that has passed brought us grief and loss, robbed many and many a home of the Christmas light and life, left fatherless many a child, added the weight of inconsolable sorrow to many a father's weight of years, struck at many a mother's heart with the most cruel weapon that bereavement can use, and left many a widow to cling to faith in the agony of despair...we could not rejoice in the Christmastide of 1914. But we can and do hope, and that with a great confidence. The darkest hours are passed, and there is a glow that we can all discern in the dawn of the New Year. We have been chastened but we have not been found wanting.'

The year 1915 brought more of the same. Prosperity for those in work. Although wages rose so too did food prices and some foods became more difficult to obtain. Casualty lists in the papers grew and more women wore black.

The war was affecting every aspect of life but people were trying to make the best of it, as was noted in a short article on fox-hunting. The South Berks Hunt had been seriously hit by the war, but had endeavoured to keep going. In spite of difficulties, it had some excellent sport. They hoped the war would be over in the next year, but if it wasn't, they would make every effort to keep hunting alive in South Berks.

Another casualty was Empire Day, 24 May, a day when children celebrated the British Empire. The *Chronicle* reported that 'owing to the war, there will be none of the elaborate arrangements or pageants which are usually held in several of the Reading schools in celebration of Empire Day. Many head masters think that this is no season for jollity, and that the celebration should be of a religious nature, and so

in several schools hymns will be sung before and after saluting the colours.'

Even though crime had fallen it had not gone away. In late February came a mini-epidemic of burglary. Three houses were entered and property stolen. Twenty-five shillings and a gold locket were stolen from 44 Radstock Road and the front door bolted against anyone entering. The same modus operandi was used at 8 Radstock Road where the burglars opened a safe and took a gold bracelet and a boy's watch and chain, before leaving through the back door. In the time it took the owners to go to the station and return, burglars had entered 47 St. Bartholomew's, ransacked two bedrooms, stolen a brooch, a lady's watch-glass, a chain and a new pair of suede gloves. The stolen purse contained no money and was later found with the contents intact in a London Road garden.

Even with news of great battles and casualties, concerns over Zeppelin raids and rising prices, life continued much as it had done in recent years. The papers carried articles about Reading F.C., who at the end of February were first equal with West Ham in the Southern League, the Fire Brigade supper at Englefield and whist drives in Mortimer. Reading Cricket Club announced its summer results at its AGM. *The Grip of Iron*, a French drama, playing at the County Theatre, was reviewed and Reverend Caulfield, although summoned, did not appear at his court case for riding a bicycle on a footpath. In his absence he was fined 6d with costs of 5s 6d.

Adverts for days out continued. The GWR advertised trips to Cheltenham Steeplechases with a convenient train to the racecourse at ordinary, first and third class fares. Leaving Reading at 9.51 it would return at 5 pm, stopping at Tilehurst, Pangbourne, Goring, Cholsey, Wallingford and Didcot on the way.

For those unable to get away, there was always the circus. Lord John Sanger's Royal Circus and Menagerie was visiting Reading on Easter Monday. The stars were Russian Cossacks who leapt from one horse to another, and who, hanging from one stirrup, were dragged along the floor to escape detection. And of course there was always shopping. The Heelas Show Week started on Easter Tuesday, 6 April, with the new season's goods all over the store, including the 'latest arrivals in fashions, especially inexpensive copies of famous models'.

Food became an issue for many people. Increasing prices were affecting living standards. Fish prices at Billingsgate were between twenty-five and fifty per cent higher than in the previous year, with supply at about half of 1914. The prices being fetched for fat-stock were also exceedingly high. Bread was essential and bakers were punished for selling underweight loaves, an offence that was taken seriously by the courts. The reason: a loaf one ounce less than the correct weight would rob a labourer, buying an average of four loaves a day a full loaf in just eight days.

The *Chronicle* compared food prices before the war and towards the end of January 1915.

Cost of food		
Food	**Before the war**	**January 1915**
4lb. loaf	6½d	7½d
7lb. best household flour	11½d	1s 2½d
English butter a 1lb.	1s 7d	1s 7d
English Cheddar a 1lb.	10½d	1s 0d
Sirloin – whole a 1lb.	1s 0d	1s 0d
New Zealand leg of lamb a lb.	8½d	9d
Pork loin a lb.	10½d	10½d
Danish bacon (side) a lb.	9½d	11½d
Tea – Stores mixture a lb.	1s 7d	1s 10d
Granulated sugar per 1lb.	2d	3½d
Eggs – dozen newly laid	1s 6d	2s 6d
Potatoes (for 14, 16 or 18lb.)	1s 0d	1s 0d
Cooking onions a lb.	2d	2d

Another shortage nationally were employable men. A simple answer was to substitute a woman but employers like Reading tramways had issues with this and were slow to employ them, others had no such qualms. The grocery chain, International Stores, in a 1916 advert proudly noted that, although nearly 2,000 of their men were in the army, there was no problem with service. Their answer to the shortage of men was to employ women. They told Reading newspaper readers

that they had an able and willing staff of lady grocers ready to attend to them who had untiring energy, adaptability, and strong will.

Prices rose faster than wages throughout the war. This naturally caused industrial tension. Most companies realised this and gave their workers' pay rises, some quicker than others, some at better rates. Two Reading companies were pro-active in their approach. Huntley and Palmers gave their workers a war bonus and Simmonds gave their employees an increased salary. The Huntley and Palmers bonus was across the board – 2s a week for everyone. At Simmonds it was graduated: lads earning 16s or less received 1s; lads and men earning between 16s and 40s received a 2s rise.

In a story that prefigures modern times, Reading's increased prosperity was shown, as today, by higher house prices. By the end of the year small houses were at a premium. 'From a period of slump and depression there has been a recovery by leaps and bounds, until now the empty houses of Reading are almost full, especially those of the cottage and villa classes, which are most difficult to obtain.' The reason then, as now, was that 'Reading is in a prosperous way just now. Employment is abundant and wages are good, whilst the families of those who are out "doing their bit" for their country are in receipt of allowances which, in many instances, make them better off than they were before the war.' Again, as now, there was a shortage of houses and insufficient building. This resulted in rising rents and property owners 'reaping a fair return for their money'.

I have suggested that Reading in general was a prosperous town, this was not true for everyone. There were still many poor families, and with Christmas on the horizon, the Reading Philanthropic Institution asked for help. In 1915 they had collected over 1800 articles of clothing, boots and shoes, along with a large quantity of books, games and toys. This allowed them 'to provide 310 parcels to the deserving poor of Reading'. This year they appealed for more of the same as they had 'a great number of poor families on their book who they hoped to assist by food and clothes at Christmas time.'

It was Christmas again. War or no war, it would be business as usual for Reading's stores. 'A second Christmas finds us still in the throes of war, and therefore the joyous festivals of Christmastide will be shorn of some of its old glamour. Whilst our "Tommies" are fighting their country's battles abroad, suffering without demur the hardships of the

trenches, those at home will hardly be in festive spirit. Nevertheless, in a quiet way Christmas will be observed, and there are two aspects of it that will serve to command attention. There will be a general desire to remember the soldiers, and, secondly, the children will not be forgotten. What can be done for them in the circumstances will be done.' It was also observed that the Christmas trade 'far exceeded expectations; and on Christmas Eve Reading presented as busy a spectacle as it had ever done. For the nonce people seemed to have forgotten the war.'

The *Reading Standard* editorial summarised 1915 in its first edition of the New Year. 'The war has cast its shadow over all public and private activities during the year, affecting in innumerable ways our corporate and individual life. Few indeed are the families that have not one or more members in the army or navy, many of whom, alas! have laid down their lives for their country. In sending recruits to the forces Berkshire has done splendidly...the response to Lord Derby's appeal for recruits has been highly satisfactory, and the authorities were almost overwhelmed with the rush of men wishing to attest. Reading is also doing its part in the manufacture of munitions, and so flourishing is the trade of the town that the National Relief Fund has very few beneficiaries. So far from unemployment being rife at this time of the year, the scarcity of labour constitutes a serious problem, and women have replaced men in many occupations.' This was not the case at Reading Council who would be criticised for their backward attitudes later in the war.

Like winter 1914/1915, the winter of 1915/1916 left its mark. Bad weather saw the Old Year out and within days of the New Year, the *Chronicle* reported considerable damage to property by a storm. 'Not for many years has so much damage been done by a storm in Reading at one particular spot.' The area affected was Elm Park where the strong wind blew the roof off the Western Enclosure. Some of it fell in the road but most was carried by another gust over Norfolk Road where some fell in a garden, the remainder damaging the roofs of a number of properties. Four houses suffered damage: numbers 103, 105, 107 and 109 Norfolk Road. How destructive the wind was is shown by the damage to number 107: two chimney-stacks down; 230 slates smashed; three lengths of guttering broken; thirty ridge tiles broken; large portion of fence damaged; large hole in roof and ceiling of front bedroom. At

number 105, Mrs Dummer had a lucky escape. She was in the garden at the time, and being partly deaf, did not hear her husband's warning to get in the house. If she had she would have been crushed to death. A six foot high pile of corrugated iron and timber landed a few inches in front of her. Although unharmed she was severely shaken.

While the war situation in 1916 would get worse on the Home Front as shortages worsened and casualty lists grew, the Chief Constable, working with reduced manpower was able to report that Reading was a safe place to live. Drunkenness was down again with ninety-four apprehended and four summoned. This was a decrease of fifteen compared with the previous twelve months. Fifty-eight of these cases were residents. Much of this was down to increased prices, fewer public houses, less and weaker beer available along with reduced hours of sale.

There was still little in the way of serious crime but bigamy was on the increase. William Norris was summoned for keeping a dog without a licence and admitted the offence. Fred Higgins, a Clyde soldier, had obviously not read the papers. He was 'summoned for not keeping burning a lamp so contrived as to render easily distinguishable every letter and figure on the identification plate on a motor car in Alexandra Road'. He was lucky. The case was dismissed and he was ordered to pay costs. Another soldier fell foul of the law. Private John Symons was charged with attempted suicide on 10 January.

Although it continued to improve, there was still a major problem with TB in Reading. In the three months from August to October, there had been forty-four new cases, seventeen of them children. A report pointed out that it was the poor who were becoming infected.

With the introduction of conscription came a new group of men, the conscientious objector. Not every one called was prepared to fight and some would not serve in any way that might be seen as assisting the taking of life. Conscientious objectors of military age who did not report for enlistment were arrested. 'Eleven such were placed for trial at Brock Barracks, Reading and sentenced to 112 days detention.' But it was not only conscientious objectors who did not want to serve. Some, like Harry Bragg, altered their birth certificates so that they seemed over-age; he was fined £20 for the offence. It was up to local tribunals to decide their fate.

Food prices continued to rise. Britain relied heavily on imported

food. About two-thirds came from abroad at the outbreak of war; in the case of wheat for bread it was 80 per cent. Increased U-boat activity, labour shortages and British military demand meant less food was available, causing prices to rise. By July, food was 55 per cent dearer than at the start of the war and 2.5 per cent higher than in May when potatoes rose 8 per cent. Bacon was 40 per cent more expensive, butter 30 per cent and margarine 18 per cent. This meant that workers needed more money to pay their bills, so wages and bonuses went up, often after disputes.

The opening of the big offensive resulted in many casualties and each week the papers carried a casualty list that got longer as the fighting became more severe. It was a time of anxiety for many in Reading, there were few families that did not have some member in the army. Already a hospital town, the size of the casualty list could be seen by the numbers coming into the many war hospitals in the area.

In August, during the Somme battles it was the second anniversary of the declaration of the war. This was celebrated by a special united service at Trinity Congregational Church. In the evening at a mass meeting in the large Town Hall, the Mayor said 'they met with very different feelings from what on August, 4, 1914, they had expected to have. Instead of being able to look back on the great battle of 1914, to end in peace before Christmas – as some of them had expected – a continuous battle had raged through the whole of 1915 and the greater part of 1916.' He concluded that 'everyone was more determined than ever that the great cause they had taken in hand should be carried through to a successful issue' at which the audience cheered. Naturally the meeting closed with the National Anthem.

With rising prices, money was in short supply. Reading's financial stringency was reflected by the work done by the Post Office over the Christmas period. Christmas 1916 was the lightest on record, so light that the Christmas Day delivery went out on time.

The third Christmas of the war was more sombre than its predecessors. A journalist recorded his thoughts: 'while there had been no lack of amusement available, either in football or in the indoor amusements, all well patronised...Christmas (had) been essentially one for the fireside, and the dark nights and slippery pavements... contributed to a stay-at-home holiday.' To another observer, Christmas

1916 would be remembered as 'Foggy Christmas'. 'Seldom have the streets of Reading been enveloped for so many hours at a time.'

Unlike in previous years, the local papers made no comment or prediction about the future. What happened in Reading is described in this book.

In this narrative there are stories of great heroism, patriotism, and duty, and, at the other end of the spectrum of life, petty squabbles, drunkenness, incest and murder. Life does not follow a linear path. The trivial and the deeply serious exist side-by-side, hand in hand. Sometimes the stories in this book are chronological, at other times grouped, related, linked across the year. In some cases they are one-offs, perhaps they stand alone, sometimes they are visited again in a different context. They may be flippant, serious, statistical, trivial or of no apparent consequence. That they appear after each other is in no way meant to detract from the personal and national struggle they portray.

National papers provided international and national news, and the local papers explained how and what local people felt. Life is a messy business; the local papers gave a warts-and-all view of real life, with no air-brushing. What one gleans from local papers is a picture of daily life, the experience of many reflecting how they saw the war, how they behaved and what they felt at the highest, lowest, saddest and happiest times in their war. I have tried to show that normal life in Reading was often mundane, that the war, while being all-pervasive, often touched people's lives, with the exception of death and disability, only in transient, temporary ways. In many cases there seemed to be no war going on because nothing had really changed, or was the situation just slightly different? If you were already hungry, how would rationing affect you? If you had no job, no shelter, how were you affected? On the other hand, what did you do if you found yourself pregnant and you weren't married, and the father is in France or perhaps your father? The answers are to be found somewhere in the following pages or in *Reading in the Great War 1914–1916.*

CHAPTER 1

1917
Seeing it Through

No one was aware of the true scale of what 1917 would bring. It would be costlier and more expensive than they imagined as they saw the New Year in with their watered-down beer. Predicted shortages would become real, even more money would be needed to win the war, and, once again, the war would not be over by Christmas. The strain the population were under is evidenced by a comment from a solicitor, employed by a cigarette manufacturer, given in the City of London Court: 'There are more cigarettes being smoked now than ever.'

None of the Reading papers printed an editorial about the coming year but the Reverend Canon Fowler at St Peter's Church in Earley expressed his feelings about it in the Parish Magazine: 'A New Year is just opening upon us. It may well be one of the most important years in our nation's history; may God bring us safely through it.'

The first complaint of the year was street lighting. The Highways and Lighting Committee notified the Head Constable that it considered the lighting restriction in Reading too severe with visitors from London asserting it was brighter in the metropolis. 'Minor accidents, except when the moon is in evidence, are of a nightly occurrence, and only a happy series of coincidences have prevented serious accidents. In some parts of the town it is impossible for those even with perfect eyesight to avoid colliding with the railings or stumbling off the kerb, while, when the recent fog overhung Reading, the necessity for some sort of guiding light was very patent.' The proposal to help alleviate the

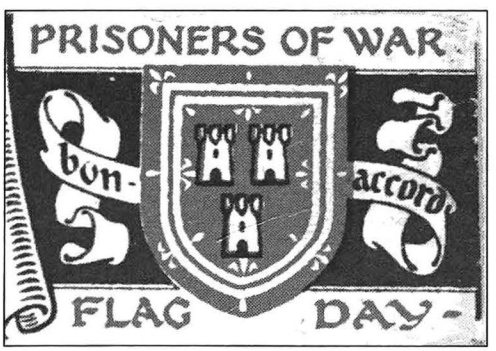
problem, that was to whiten twenty crossings, seems to have missed the point.

That nothing else was done is evidenced by a formal complaint from the National Union of Gas Workers. In October they passed a resolution stating that the restricted lighting of the streets of Reading was extremely dangerous and unnecessary. They asked the council to remedy the situation.

Why, when it was obvious to everyone that Reading would not be attacked, were such efforts made to keep the town safe, and why would a school have to have a plan in case this happened in broad daylight? There are no answers, but Reading School did have a plan. After watching an airship passing overhead 'a conference of Reading head teachers met to decide upon the best scheme to be adopted should there be an air raid.' They decided that everybody should stay in the school buildings, positioning themselves near the inner walls, staying away from windows and doors. To distract the children from any noise caused by explosions, they should be given work to do. Caretakers had to lock the gates, draw the blinds and make sure there were six buckets of water available along with a well-stocked first aid box.

After twenty-nine months of war, with countless assaults on their purses, the people of Reading had had enough. The council decided that all street collections were to be regulated with everyone having a permit that could only be obtained from the Police Station a month in advance. No person was to be annoyed or obstructed and collectors had to stand at least thirty yards apart. No-one under sixteen could collect and girls between sixteen and eighteen had to be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult. This did not decrease the number of flag days but it reduced the pressure of compulsion.

The first appeal of the year was for day nurseries. The Reading Health Society and Reading Women's Suffrage Society each ran a day nursery for working women. This added many women to the workforce and ensured expert care for the rising generation. Although they received a small grant from the Board of Education and charged a fee of 4d a day, this was



A flag sold to raise funds to send necessities and comforts to PoWs.

insufficient. They appealed for a generous response to allow them to keep the nurseries open.

Reading prided itself on its innovative ways of collecting money and in January held a Gold and Silver Week to raise funds for the War Hospitals Supplies Depot at 16 Duke Street. The appeal touched the hearts of many: 'one person walked in with a half sovereign and placed it on the depot counter. Another walked in with a gold Albert and, leaving it for the wounded, left chainless. Another deposited 27s which the family had destined for Christmas presents for themselves. A group of little schoolboys, who had had 4s 6d given to them to buy some oranges, handed the money over to the depot.' The gold and silver was then showcased before being offered for sale.

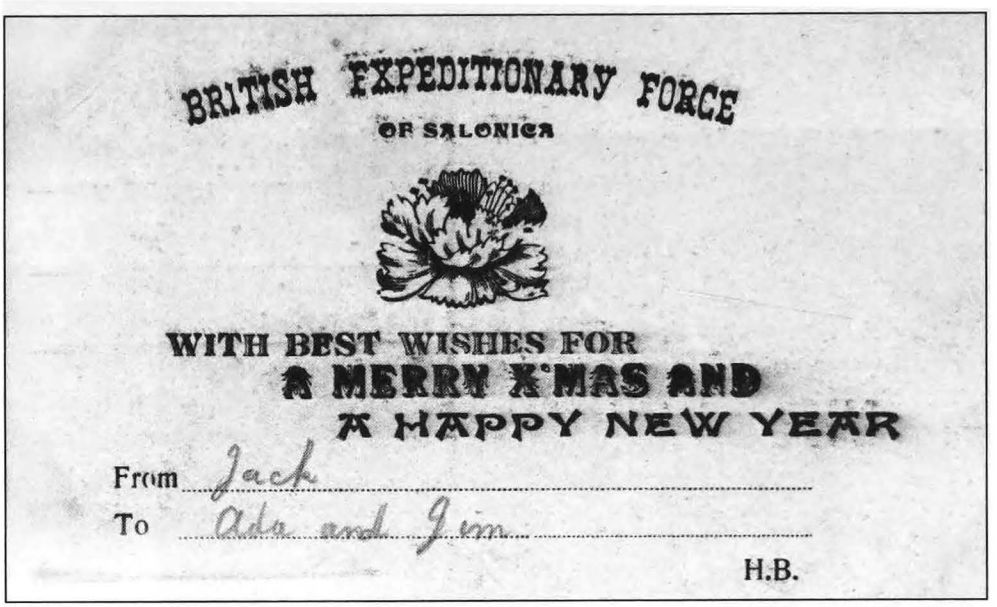
Spot of the Vine Hotel, owned by Mrs Baldwin, had raised £33, mostly in halfpennies, for various charities when this photo was taken.

Berkshire was a very generous benefactor of many causes. In March it was placed fourth in a subscriptions list to the Agricultural Relief of Allies' Fund. Berkshire's total, £7,277, was exceeded by Lancashire and Cheshire jointly, Lincolnshire, and Kent, with Hampshire in fifth place with £6,651. Wales raised £1,040 and Scotland £558. The Meat Traders Red Cross Fund received £2,570 from the Reading and District Butchers and Cattle Dealers Association, while the British Farmers Red Cross Fund received £3,297 from Berkshire farmers.

The Red Cross needed all the money it could get as is evidenced by the scale of work done by a small county like Berkshire. Its annual report showed how busy it was in Berkshire, running thirty-four female and six male detachments consisting of 1,089 women and 182 men. They were staffing nineteen auxiliary hospitals that provided 787 beds and treated 4,855 patients, adding annexes and marquees to accommodate more when needed. Berkshire VADs supplied 234 women for special service, most in war hospitals in England but some in Egypt, France, Malta and Salonika. They had been assisted by the Berkshire Automobile Club, who had transported more than 30,000 sick and wounded soldiers to and from the war and auxiliary hospitals in Reading and Berkshire.

The Women's Land Army was formed in February 1917 to provide a labour force for agricultural work. It was disbanded in 1919 when the army was demobilised. This lady is a member of the Women's Forage Corps of the ASC.

No effort was spared to get money out of pockets, even the pockets of children, by attempting to shame those who did not want to contribute. To provide funds for the War Hospital Supplies Depot, children were encouraged to pledge to give a mite (1/8th of a penny) each week. If 8,000 contributed it would raise £216 per annum. The fund-raising committee wished to shame Reading children into giving



The 7 Battalion Royal Berks were fighting in Salonika. This card was sent by Jack to Ada and Jim in Maidenhead.

their pocket money by comparing them to Maori children. A beautifully-equipped motor ambulance, costing over £400, had driven through Reading the week previously. On its side was the motto 'Given by Maori children.' The committee told the children of Reading that they did not love their country. 'What real lovers of the Mother-country our kin across the seas must be! Even the little kiddies sharing in their great fight for their "Mother".'

Normally, the money raised by flag days for allied countries was sent to those countries or goods bought and sent there. In March though, the money raised for Serbia was used to bring 319 Serbian boys to Britain. They were here to be educated, and the thirty who

'The Hunting Gallop' performed by Katesgrove girls at the yearly children's concerts.

found themselves living at 3 Bulmershe Road had been sent specifically to Reading for agricultural training.

Reading was also proud of its manpower contribution to war industries. Reading was at the forefront of the National Service Scheme. In a short period of time after the scheme opened, 2,000 had been interviewed at the Employment Exchange on London Street for work of national importance. A further appeal was made for help on the land, but this was not as successful.

Readers may remember that the University College had been recognised by the Ministry of Munitions as a training establishment. The college was now offering practical training for potential munition workers, free of charge. It was open to men exempt from military service and women aged eighteen to thirty-five. Class hours were 9 to 5 for two weeks or 6 to 10 for three weeks. Applicants had to sign an undertaking to work full-time in a munitions factory on completion of training. Preference was given to those who were prepared to leave the district and go where there was a demand for labour.

The first news of Reading F.C. players in the services came shortly after the New Year. Lieutenant Jack Huggins, Northumberland Fusiliers, outside left and Reading teacher, had been killed in action. He was classed as the unluckiest of players in the matter of injuries. Corporal Lofthouse had met with an accident in France while playing football and was in hospital.

Let's examine the work of the police in 1916. As every year at this time, a crime report was published for the third quarter of the previous year. It reported that no juvenile offenders had been whipped but two had been sent to Reformatory School. Compared to the same quarter in 1915, there was an increase of eight indictable offences (mostly indecency offences) but a decrease of thirty-nine non-indictable offences. While assault had fallen, cruelty to animals had risen markedly as had education cases. The magistrates said such a great rise could not be allowed to continue and the Bench would impose heavier fines especially when previous fines had been held over.

Indictable offences

	1915	1916
Indecent offences	1	5
Burglary	0	3
House breaking	1	1
Breaking into shops	2	1
Embezzlement	5	1
Simple larceny	28	34
Other larcenies	4	5
False pretences	2	2
Receiving stolen goods	1	2
Attempts to commit suicide	3	3
Other offences	4	2
Total	51	59

Non-indictable offences

	1915	1916
Assaults	26	21
Cruelty to animals	7	21
Education Acts	30	33
Game laws	7	4
Highways Acts	87	96
Drunkenness	61	23
Liquor laws	2	5
Malicious Damage	12	29
Military and Naval laws	89	58
Bye laws	20	13
Poor law offences	4	2
Revenue laws	9	4
Stealing growing fruit, etc.	26	19
Vagrancy Act	21	4
Defence of the Realm Acts (Lighting Orders, etc.)	3	16
Other offences	18	35

Over the year there had been 355 arrests, of which 245 were residents, 114 of them married, 269 employed, 314 could read and write only imperfectly while 41 could read and write well. In 1916, 68 more crimes had been reported to the police than in 1915. The number of juvenile offences had risen from 25 to 73; of the offenders, 20 had been sent to Reformatory or Industrial School, 13 whipped, bound over or put on probation, 8 discharged and 1 fined. In 1916 there were 52 cases of drunkenness compared to 42 in 1915.

One case that would appear in the 1918 statistics was classed as newsworthy in 1917. In the twenty-first century it would have generated pages of print, an inquiry and a lengthy sentence – child-beating in a boys' home. William Lansbury, Master of St Bennet's Home in Emmer Green, was charged 'that he, having the custody and care of Edward Still, Arthur Wild, Albert Card, James Rogers, under the age of sixteen, did assault and beat them in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering.' A like charge was preferred against Sarah Lansbury, his wife, the Matron of the four children. Both were remanded on bail as long as they did not return to the home to take charge of the boys.

The court heard that the neighbours had complained about the screaming and crying coming from the Home and how both would beat the children for the same offence, usually minor. Both were convicted for severely beating the children. Mr Lansbury was fined £5 or a month's imprisonment and his wife was fined £2 or fourteen days for unskilful birching using pieces of bushes tied together.

What else the police had done makes interesting reading. During the year 1,164 articles had been found by police, tram conductors, conductresses and private persons. Over half, 591, were restored to their owners, 194 returned to the finders and 379 were unclaimed. Their miscellaneous duties were numerous: they found '1352 premises insecure and unsafe and made them secure or directed the attention of the owners thereto'; restored 61 lost children, found wandering in the streets, to their parents; conveyed 7 sheep, 27 horses and 5 cows found straying on the highways to the pound; seized 168 stray or homeless dogs, 71 of which were claimed, 22 sold, 4 left in the home and 69 destroyed; 138 persons were found in the streets injured, insensible or ill and destitute, and were conveyed to the hospital, infirmary or taken to their homes, and in all cases where necessary, the police rendered first aid to the injured.

This had been achieved by an under-manned force of eighty-seven instead of the authorised strength of 113. The number of specials was also lower, with 335 serving in 1917 against 411 sworn in at the start of the war. Many had resigned because of ill-health and others to join the colours, their places being taken by volunteers. Since August 1914, 42 regular police had joined the colours, 20 as reservists (military service completed but still liable for call-up if needed) and the others during 1915 and 1916 as volunteers, Derby men (men who had volunteered would be called up only if needed) or conscripts. Three had been killed, 1 died in training, 3 wounded and 1 was a PoW. When substitutes became available, 10 more were to be released for service.

The report made no mention of their catching escaped PoWs. In the middle of March, Police Sergeant Pierce saw two men walking through Twyford. Suspecting they were aliens, he apprehended them without resistance and took them into custody. They were Jano Chylanzi, a Hungarian, and Karl Perus, an Austrian, who had escaped from a labour internment camp in Gloucestershire. They had taken a train to Reading and decided to walk to Windsor, purchasing food on the way and sleeping rough. They were returned to Yates Labour Camp.

No mention was made of cutting down suicide attempts either, but PC Bowler had to do this one night in May. William Baker, using a skeleton key broke into Turner's, a grocery shop at 101 Friar Street. He was seen entering and when the door was forced open he was found hanging from the staircase by a necktie. Taken into custody, fortunately still alive, he was remanded while enquiries were made.

Under the heading Military and Naval Laws, the police dealt with any misdemeanour or worse committed by men serving in the forces, before handing them on to appropriate authorities. The case of Ambrose Jaggers, an Australian army deserter, is unusually exciting, but the basis of the story – desertion and capture – is true of many. He was seen at Earley crossroads and was suspected of being a deserter. PC Dutton questioned him but took his eyes off the man when someone shouted to him. The prisoner escaped but Dutton found him hiding in a belt of trees 200 yards away. He arrested Jaggers and took him to Earley where he handed him over to the Special Constables. During the time it took Dutton to get to the phone at the Post Office to call for a conveyance, the prisoner again escaped. Another chase

took Dutton over the railway lines and across Palmer Park. Finding a bike, he headed the prisoner off at Kennetside. A crowd stopped the runaway who jumped in to the Kennet. Taking a boat, Dutton sculled out to him. The prisoner shouted: 'Look sharp; I am nearly done', and was about to sink when he was 'fished up'. Dutton sculled back to the shore with one hand and dragged the prisoner with the other. Jaggers was taken to East's boathouse, attended to and taken to Wokingham in a police car. It turned out the same man had escaped from the Reading police a few days earlier.

Many avenues for female employment were opened by the shortage of men. Reading the contemporary comments about their work, very few were found wanting. One very pleased employer was the Thames Conservancy Board. At a meeting in January it stated that when war broke out it employed 435 men. Of these 317 were eligible for service and only fifteen had been claimed as exemptions. Unfortunately, ten had been killed on active service. To fill their place, the board had appointed women as lock-keepers and the utmost satisfaction had been given.

Eventually, the town council came round to the idea that women could perform police duties. They recommended that two women were employed 'to perform such duties of the police in relation to women and children as can lawfully be assigned to them.' They would be employed full-time, provided with a uniform and paid at the same rate as probationary constables and, after a probationary period would be 'paid according to the scale at which other officers in the force' were remunerated.

Engineering companies began to realise that women could do men's work. The Ministry of Munitions extended its plans for the employment of women on engineering work involving a considerable amount of skill, in order to replace manpower withdrawn for the army. 'It has been found that educated women are capable of undertaking this more skilled work.' The Ministry appealed to women to offer themselves for this service for preliminary training at University College, Reading. Candidates had to be between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five and not under 5′ 2″ in height.

Another interesting report was produced about the borough's health during 1915. The borough comprised 9,106 acres and the 1911 census had 87,693 inhabitants of which 42,056 were male and 45,637 female.

Reading were slow to appoint female police officers and limited their role considerably, however, they were paid at the same rate as the men. These are the first women to become officers of the law. On the left is Miss Audrey Addison and on the right Miss Frances F. Abbott, both were trained in the Women's Police Service, St Stephen's House, Westminster.

In 1915 this had dropped to 86,299. The marriage rate was 22.87, the net birth rate 19.89 and the net death rate from all causes was 13.89 per 1,000 population.

There were more births than deaths with 1,792 births – 924 male (70 illegitimate) and 868 female (48 illegitimate) to 1,199 deaths – 566 male (113 combatants) and 633 female.

The deaths were further broken down by age range and common causes. The oldest male died at 97 and the oldest female at 99. Infant mortality under 1 was 82 per 1,000 and 110.2 for illegitimate births.

Age group	Number of deaths
Under 1	147
1 to 5	46
5 to 65	569
65 plus	437
80 plus	128 (40 male & 88 female)
90 plus	16 (3 male & 13 female)

N.B. Due to double and treble counting in the last three groups, the total does not equal the net deaths.

In 1915, thirty-nine children died from whooping cough, nineteen from diarrhoea, nine from measles, seven from diphtheria, four of enteric fever and one from scarlet fever. Heart attack was not listed in the report but post-mortem reports show it was responsible for a number of deaths throughout the year. The other causes were: suicide (8 deaths), violent death (17 including one murder), cancer (81 deaths), pulmonary TB (98 deaths) and bronchitis, pneumonia and pleurisy (212 deaths). No cases of smallpox were reported.

That overall health in the borough was improving, comes as a surprise when for the third consecutive year the Reading Borough Hospital (RBH) announced a deficit, the biggest so far. The deficit on the year was £8,503 3s 4d, in 1914 it had been £5,027 17s 5d and in 1915 £3,457 5s 11d. After using money in the Suspense Capital Account, it had paid off the 1914 deficit but was still running a deficit of £10,655 2s 4d. The press was told the hospital was in a serious position. They had three options: continue piling up the debts until they had to sell off just about everything; the neighbourhood of Reading had to find the money; or close a part of the hospital, a quick and effective remedy but prejudicial to the treatment of patients and was therefore the last resort. Like everyone else, they were hit by rising costs but, unlike businesses, they could not pass them on. Provisions were up 25 per cent, a house doctors' salary was four times higher than

in 1914, coal and the annual clean cost twice the earlier price, £293 had been spent on stonework repair, £271 was paid on the overdraft and £81 on new equipment for the military ward.

In October it announced that its general fund would run into a £6,000 deficit and that it still had a 1916 debt of £10,655. While it had received subscriptions and donations of £11,435, it asked the inhabitants of Reading to donate £11,000 by the end of the year, just ten weeks away. Within the week, it had received £2,000 from Huntley & Palmers who also gave £1,000 to the British Red Cross.

RBH was not alone. Redlands War Hospital posted a deficit as well, £500 6s 11d.

Another organisation in need of money was the Royal Berks Regiment Tobacco fund that needed £1,020 to cover their costs over the following six months. They reported that in 1916 they had provided four million cigarettes, four-and-a-half tons of tobacco, 260,000 cigars, 2,000 pipes and 25,000 local papers to the 8,000 men at the front.

One public body, the University College, declared a surplus. By stringent economy, it had managed to save £1,579 12 6d by spending less on repairs and renovation; it profited from the military's payment for their use of the buildings and grounds.

As in the previous war years, Reading Tramways made a substantial profit (£7,268) but not as much as in 1916 (£7,485). Again they were able to give £4,000 for rate relief. Their income was at record level, £45,404, £3,744 higher than 1916 but at the same time their expenses were higher by £3,309. Although the total mileage run was 1,239 miles less than 1916, it had carried more passengers, 10,919,533 against 9,953,906 in 1916. As well as more passengers, it had carried nearly 2,000 more parcels and over 53,000 more school pupils. Like most other organisations, the majority of the male employees were with the colours, 50 – 75 per cent of the 1914 total. They were able to report that women were being trained as drivers and were making good progress, and that the salaries of the General Manager and the Engineer were to be raised by £200 in three instalments over a two-year period.

Although the tramways had contributed to the town rates, the council found it necessary to increase the rates by 1d in the pound. This was caused by rising prices and increased wages. To make sure the citizens of Reading really understood why they had to pay more, the facts were clearly laid out for them. Elementary education increased

by £1,062 and Secondary education by £1,150. The Watch Committee needed an extra £1,207 because of war bonuses, female police allowance and boot allowances for Special Constables. Highways needed £5 more and the Committee for the Care of the Mentally Defective needed an extra £48. These increases were without pay increases. The salaries of the Reading Waterworks Manager was increasing from £400 to £500, the Farm Steward from £350 to £450 and the Matron of Park Hospital from £90 to £120 in two annual instalments. The war allowance paid to waterworks employees was increased by 1d an hour and park-keepers had their pay increased by 5s a week. Most of the police sergeants and married constables also had their war allowance increased by 3s a week. The same was true in the district where the biggest increase was £1,395 for the prevention and treatment of venereal disease, maternity care and child welfare work. Only Reading School, the town Sanitary Committee, and the District Fire Brigade requested less than in 1916.

The town council were speedy in response to some things but slow on others. They were keen to be the first or best in response to government calls for help, but slower to raise wages and employ women and very slow to appreciate the importance of the history of their time to the future. It took them thirty-three months of being at war before they decided to add a section relating to relics of the Great War to the museum and requested donations of anything relevant. Unfortunately, mostly now disposed of.

In other ways too, Reading people were thinking about the future. In March there was a meeting about the decimalisation of coinage and metric weights and measurements in Abbey Hall by an Australian engineer, C.E. Barton, under the auspices of Reading Chamber of Commerce. Mr L. Sutton, the president, expressed the hope that universal peace would bring a universal coinage and system of weights and measures. He thought that 'although loyal to the names of our coinage, people would get used to the changes like they had to paper money in the war. The sovereign would become the 10 florin piece, the half-sovereign five florins, the shilling a half-florin and the 6d a ¼florin. New coins would be the nickel 10 cent piece (2½d), the 5 cent (1¼d) and the bronze 4, 2 and 1 cent pieces would be the penny, half-penny and farthing respectively.' He also hoped we would adopt the metric system used by many countries. Fifty-four years later the

On America Day, 20 April, the American flag was flown from municipal buildings.

country adopted a national decimal coinage, but, after a century, the metrication process is still incomplete.

Across the county, in villages, towns, halls and in factories, Rolls of Honour were kept. Some detailed those on active service, some those

who had died, while others recorded both service and loss. A typical example was the Reading firm of Elliott and Sons. Their roll of honour listed 127 workmen, of whom seven had been killed and sixteen wounded. University College had 406 members serving, with thirty-eight names on their Roll of Honour. While such losses were irreplaceable, some were particularly detrimental to the future. One such death was that of Lieutenant S.B. McLaren, a Professor of Mathematics at the College, a man of strong personality and great ability, who was posthumously compared to Einstein, Jeans, Planck, Laue and Abraham.

Rolls of honour did not satisfy everyone; many wanted a more permanent form of remembrance. Across the country, many streets in industrialised towns and cities had set up 'Street Shrines', but, like Reading's rolls of honour, these were not seen as sufficient recognition of the sacrifice made. The congregation of St Mary's Church (Reading Minster) decided on a shrine. On unveiling it, the Reverend Wickham-Legg said 'the crucifix above the boards bearing the names of the fallen, was the symbol of the supreme sacrifice and pointed to the supreme triumph and was designed to inspire the spirit of sacrifice in National Service, a sense of thankfulness, and the certainty of triumph.'

This was not everyone's view. One letter writer thought it was idolatrous to have a shrine and that it went against the 2nd Commandment. He thought it was pointless to pray for the dead as they were either in Heaven where they did not need prayer or in Hell where they were without redemption. Instead the writer suggested a 'nice marble or stone slab with the names inscribed on it'.

As in the previous three years, the papers contained casualty lists and short biographies. Some highlighted the youth of some soldiers on enlistment, to which parents and recruiting sergeants had turned a blind eye. The first to be mentioned was Private J.H. Chester, son of Mr and Mrs T.H. Chester, 92 Catherine Street. Wounded at Le Sars in November, he was now in a hospital in Warrington. His right arm and leg had been amputated. Now aged nineteen, he had joined the Royal Berks in August 1914 under age. He was previously employed by Huntley & Palmers. His father and only brother were also serving in France.

Some of the stories were unusual, while others reflected the pride of their families in their menfolk's achievements. Alfred Croom, who

The high casualty figures did not stop people getting married. This is Warrant Officer (II) E.T. Waldron, ASC, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Tom Waldron, of The Nook, Whitley and his bride Nellie Norris from Eastgate, Taunton. He had been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for his work at the front.

after the war played for Berkshire and Warwickshire cricket clubs, had a remarkable experience. 'In his left-hand breast pocket was his pay book, a Testament, and a pocket book containing some half-dozen photographs. The shrapnel went clean through them all and penetrated into his body. One of the photographs was of himself and the hole which the shrapnel made was in exactly the same place as that in which he was actually wounded: a strange coincidence.'

The parents of Private W. Johnson, 40 Crescent Road, proudly sent details of his unusual time on the Western Front. He had played for Harry Lauder when he toured the front without a pianist. Instead of just watching, Johnson joined in and Lauder was so pleased he had him temporarily released to accompany him on the remainder of the tour – twenty-five concerts for 50,000 men. As a keepsake, Lauder presented him with a signed piece of music 'To W. Johnson, my pianist during my tour to the front.'

Mention has been made of losses of only sons, and also of families who suffered multiple bereavements. In April, the *Chronicle* expressed its sympathy to Mrs Mary Annison of 315 London Road who received the news that her only surviving son, twenty-nine-year-old Guy, had been killed by a shell which landed near his truck. Her other son, Richard, had been killed in 1915 during the Gallipoli campaign.

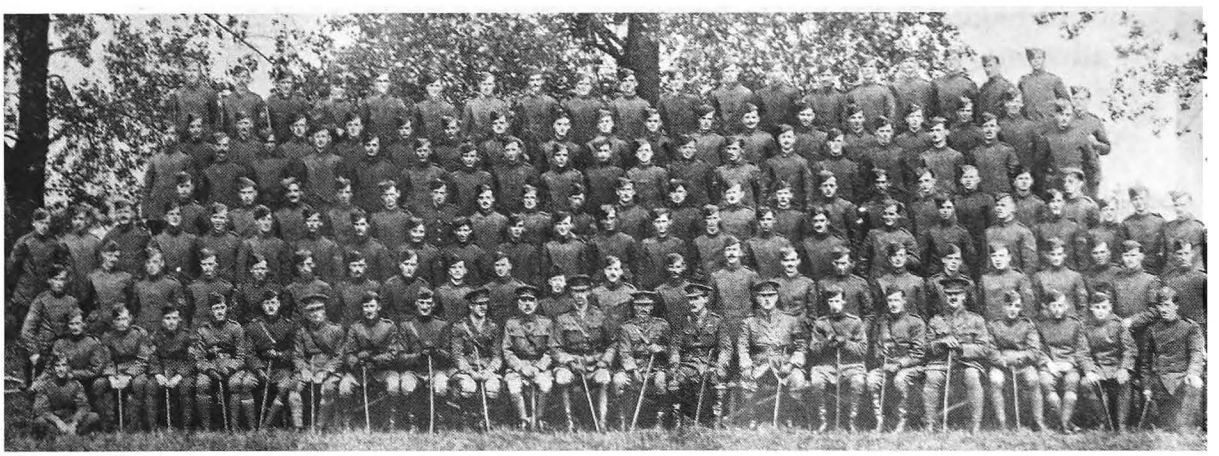
A typical brief biography is that of Private Sydney Smith of the Royal Berks, a pre-war dairyman of 61 York Road. He was killed in action on 28 April while acting as a sniper. He joined the army on 2 January and went to France in April. He was thirty-two and educated at Bearwood. Less typical was Private White, son of Henry and Ellenor of 15 Sidmouth Street. He died in France on 10 May from appendicitis after an operation. The twenty-nine-year-old had enlisted in October 1915 and gone to France on 3 December 1916. He was a pupil teacher under the Reading Education Authority, and from 1906 to 1909 an uncertified assistant teacher. Prior to joining the army he had been a certificated teacher on the staff at Caversham Council School after attending University College for two years. He was a good teacher, a capital musician and a useful cricketer.

As in pre-war days, civilian deaths were reported, as were inquests into unexplained and sudden deaths. Two examples are those of Charlotte Wellman, a fifty-year-old spinster, and of Henry Moody. Charlotte was found lying in a shrubbery near Hemdean House School in Caversham with a small phial of chloroform by her which she had stolen from her doctor. She had been treated for Phthisis and nervous depression and had admitted to being depressed. The autopsy showed she was suffering from pulmonary T.B. The verdict was suicide during temporary insanity. Mr Moody, a railway clerk in the engineering office at Paddington, who lived at 'Cameron', Oxford Road, Tilehurst, was found dead in Wigmore Lane at 7.30 am on 15 February. A verdict of natural causes was returned when the autopsy showed a diseased aortic heart valve and aorta. However, 'the probability was that hurrying to catch his train with a full stomach had actually been the cause of his death.'

Although the number of service men in the town had decreased considerably, there were still enough to fill the Town Hall for an evening of dance in early January. Life was not all work as the Warrant Officers, Flight Sergeants and Sergeants of the RFC, No.1 School of

Military Aeronautics, Coley Park, hosted what was described as one of the most enjoyable dances at the Town Hall. The invited guests were their staff officers, including the commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Bonham-Carter, the Sergeants Mess at Brock Barracks, the Pioneers and the staff at the war hospitals. About 200 danced the night away in twenty-two dances with music provided by 2nd Air Mechanic Howarth.

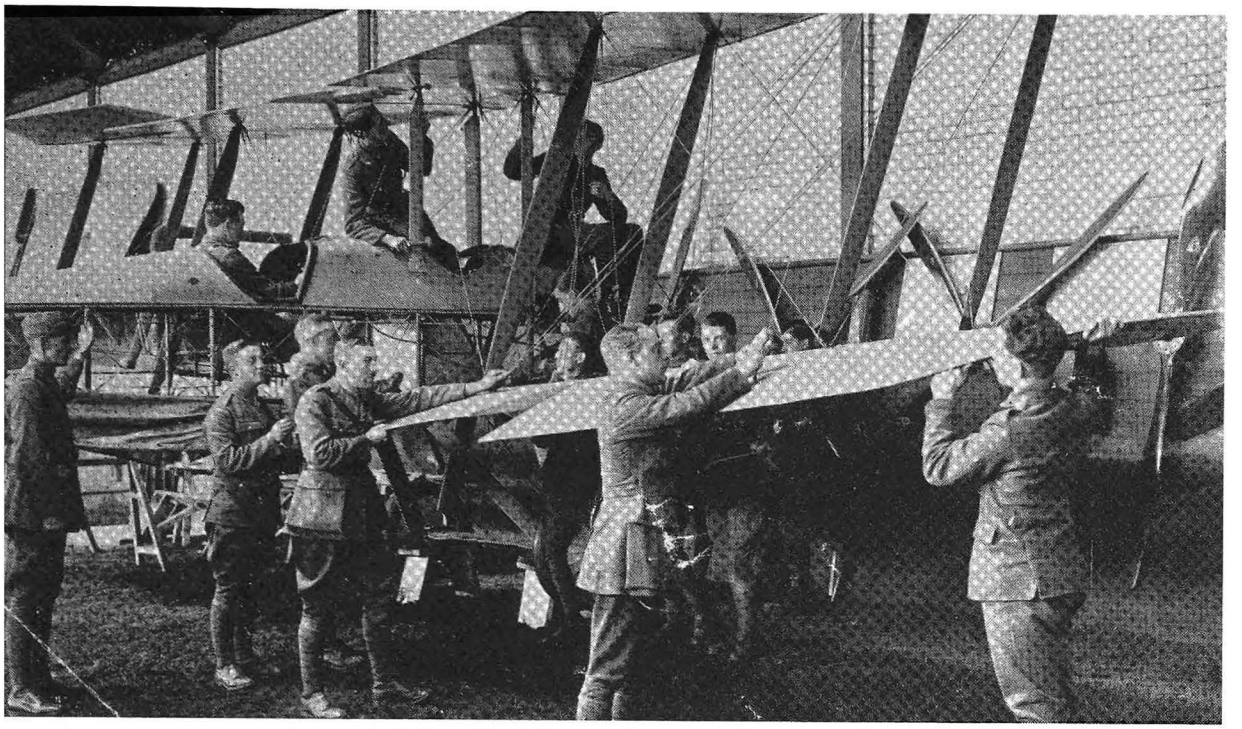
The No.1 School of Military Aeronautics was not just for the RFC. It was also home to a number of Russian officers and cadets for a period during the year. From summer 1917, it fielded a cricket team that played on the county cricket ground. After each flight of the school playing each other, other teams became involved.



This photograph of the men and officers of No.1 School of Technical Training shows the size of the unit.

'By 1917 cadets were doing a four-week course in artillery spotting, use of wireless, photography and machine gun instruction, practical training provided by lodging old aircraft fuselages in trees lining Upper Redlands Road near Wantage Hall. This startling sight was only matched by the activities on playing fields alongside Elmhurst Road, where wingless aircraft were used to provide taxi-ing experience.' It was during this time the writer of the Biggles stories, W.E. Johns, learned to fly at Reading.

At the inquest in February into the death of 3rd Class Air Mechanic John Rae, a married twenty-nine-year-old, it was found that life at RFC Coley Park had an unpleasant side. Evidence was given about the poor treatment of the sick. 'All the men at the Coley Park factory had a

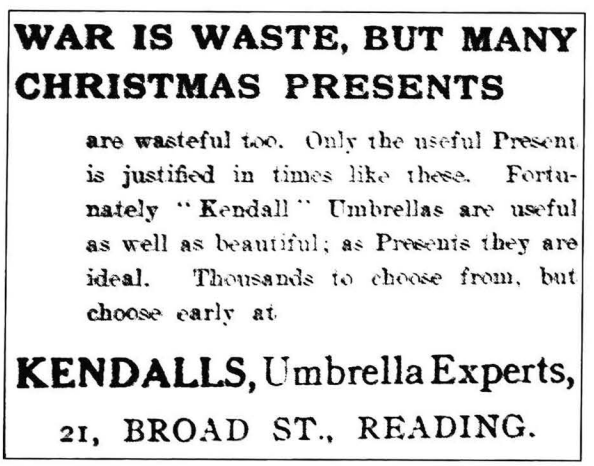


Training fitters at No.1 School of Technical Training in Coley Park.

"dread fear" of parading sick. This was because they knew that without any adequate medical examination they would be sentenced to extra drills and punitive medicines, as in the case of the man who died from spotted fever…after parading sick and being punished with extra drills.' Additionally, the food at the camp was bad.

The number of men missing who were from the streets of Reading is indicated by Huntley & Palmers' male work force. They employed just twenty-four men who were fit for general service while 1,395 men were with the colours. Their places had been taken by women, girls and boys.

This shortage is reflected in the Situations Vacant columns. 'A FEW RESPECTABLE CLEAN GIRLS wanted for packing custard powder, age 14 to 15; permanent employment under best conditions.' 'Clerk


WAR IS WASTE, BUT MANY CHRISTMAS PRESENTS
are wasteful too. Only the useful Present is justified in times like these. Fortunately "Kendall" Umbrellas are useful as well as beautiful; as Presents they are ideal. Thousands to choose from, but choose early at
KENDALLS, Umbrella Experts,
21, BROAD ST., READING.

A clever advert that probably summed up the feelings of most people.

Messenger girls of the GPO carried telegrams around the town on their bicycles.

wanted for Bakery business; must have previous experience and be quick and accurate at the work; either sex.' 'Girls wanted for photographic work' – what sort was not explained. Heelas required counter order assistants, a junior assistant in the china and glass section, improvers and dressmaking apprentices. E. Jackson & Sons of Oxford Street wanted at once, two young ladies, with good business experience, for men's and boys' clothing and outfitting.

For some businesses the shortage of men meant closure, either permanently or until their safe return from the war. Fred Joynes, Builders' Iron Merchant, 21 & 22 London Street, advised his customers during February that 'owing to the whole of his staff being called to the colours,' he had been reluctantly compelled to relinquish his business in Reading, and disposed of his stock and goodwill to Messrs Callas, Sons and May of Oxford Street.

At the same time, W.J. Stevens joined up, even though there was no one to take over his one-man purveyor's business. He told customers that he was temporarily closing down and would re-open on his

discharge from the army. His wife would retain the house in the meantime.

In the outlying villages where there were two similar one-man shops, a tribunal decided who stayed. In Beenham, nine miles southwest of Reading, the two shopkeepers had both been passed as fit for garrison duty in Britain. Both were married, ran grocer's shops and were a year apart in age. However, C. Layley, the elder at thirty-nine, was also a baker.

The chairman of the tribunal asked if they had decided between them who should carry on in business; he received a negative reply. One of the panel suggested drawing straws to decide who should go. Layley told them that, although he had the help of a boy, he did all the baking himself and was the only baker in a three-mile radius; he used eight sacks a day and was in an exempted occupation. He had been there for fourteen years and had four children, whereas F. Smith only had two. Another of the panel suggested that neither was fit to be in the army and neither should be drafted. Smith played his trump card and told them he had an off-licence and that without him his shop would close, as his wife could not carry on the business herself. His application for exemption was refused but he was not to be called up until 30 April. Layley was given exemption until 30 April, but was allowed leave to appeal. They were only opponents in trade and he had nothing against Smith, Layley told the panel, and he would make every effort to get Mr Smith's customers to return to him after the war.

The problem of one-man businesses had exercised the minds of Reading's Chamber of Commerce who had tried to find a way out of the difficulty. They formed a panel of experts; a businessman needing help could choose two of the panel with whom to have a full discussion. In turn they would offer such help and assistance as they could. Whether or not this was fruitful is not recorded.

For those grocers not troubled by the draft, life did not get easier because the military authorities wanted to get hold of every man they could, in any way possible. There were also new regulations on how foods could be sold. A well-attended Reading Grocers' Association meeting in April was urged to make sure they procured the new registration forms, displayed them, completed them accurately, even including casual labour, and sent them off monthly to the recruiting officer. Failure to do so would be costly. They were also informed of

new regulations regarding tea. They had until 7 July to sell any packet tea that did not display the weight. Tea in future could not be sold by cost, only by weight, and, as it had to be sold loose, the wrapper was not included in the weight.

The big story at the start of the year was the dispute at Messrs Burberry, Clothing Manufacturer in Mill Lane. The company refused to recognise the United Garment Workers Union and as a result nearly 300, mostly female, employees walked out. The problem had arisen before Christmas when the management had been asked for a war bonus of 5s for men and 4s for girls. The strikers claimed both their communications had been ignored. Mr Burberry's reply was to offer an increase to those working on coats, but only if they left the union.

Nearly 300 – among them only twenty men – refused and were given the choice of losing their jobs and staying in the union or leaving the union and keeping their jobs. All walked out. Within a couple of days, some had found other work, and 140, including some union members, had returned to work. Mr Burberry refused to meet them for discussions as union members, but would see them as a workers' deputation. This offer was turned down because they were not fighting for money but for the right to be in a union. Their action was supported by Reading Trades & Labour Council who laid out the case for the Minister of Labour.

Two of the strikers standing in the snow on the picket-line received fines for their part in the action. Connie Hallett, of 21 Granby Gardens, a locked-out worker at Burberry's, was summoned for throwing snowballs to the annoyance of passers-by in Mill Lane on 11 January. There was laughter in the court when they found out that, although she had been cautioned, she later threw a snowball that was very hard. She received a 5s fine. A fellow co-worker, Sydney Bristow of 20 Howard Street, was also fined 5s for the same offence. There was no laughter in this case because the snowball had hit PC Allen, who was walking with the manager of Burberry's. Bristow apologised for hitting him accidentally, explaining that he was throwing at the girls who were returning to work.

The violence did not stop with snowballs. Elsie Youlton of 47 George Street was summoned for assaulting and beating William Cordery, a presser, of 144 Elgar Road. In a court crowded with fellow strikers, and many more outside, Cordery alleged that, once his police

escort had left, she pushed him, and called him a traitor and blackleg. His ankle struck the kerb and he had difficulty in getting home because of it. Claiming she had been pushed by workers still employed at the factory, she denied the charges. Prosecution witnesses gave evidence that she did push Cordery. The Bench considered the case proved and bound her over in a sum of £10 and costs of 5s.

At the same session, Leonard Jones, 169 Elgar Road, was summoned for assaulting Harry Collier, a tailor and fitter at Burberry's. He said he had been called blackleg and traitor and hit on the jaw by someone in the large crowd outside the factory. Putting his arm up, the defendant jumped out of the crowd and punched him on the back of the neck and felled him. As a result, he was off work for a week. Other witnesses gave evidence but the Chairman of the Bench dismissed the case because of the conflicting evidence.

Further unrest followed at the factory with strikers obstructing the police and throwing flour and soot at those going into work. On 11 February, a massed union demonstration that marched from St Mary's Butts to Market Place took the lock-out to a higher level. After protesting about the present Burberry situation and their poor record of pay increases, they called for the Prime Minister's urgent attention to secure a settlement, in order to avoid the possibility of other workers being involved in the dispute. They had appealed to the government previously without success, so they had no course open to them but to bring to a stoppage work of national importance. If Mr Burberry could do as he liked, then they could do as they wanted.

In an attempt to end the strike, Burberry's sent out an official letter. It clearly explained the company's position. It was not a lock-out nor was it about wages, merely a question of union representation which they did not want. 'We admit to our work people full right to combine and to be collectively represented by individuals amongst themselves, but we decline to recognise any outside society.' They felt that they responded well and were good employers, having granted a 15 per cent wage rise in May 1916 and contemplating further increases during 1917. They had matched the requested war bonuses, proposed advantageous re-grading and a sick[ness] benefit club. Claiming notable generosity, they had offered to look after the money spent on union fees in a savings scheme, and would also double it to 6d a week. In an attempt to damn the union, Burberry's pointed out that the union

would be responsible for closing down an expanding business 'which represents in wages alone many thousands a year to Reading families'.

This was not the view of the locked-out workers. 'Before the whole of his workers he emphatically stated that his terms were on condition they came out of their union and he would not have a trade unionist on his firm... "Come out of your union or there is the door".'

There was too much at stake and, at the request of the Labour Minister, 'and with a view to preventing friction between the government and the various trade unions, whose members are engaged on munitions work, Messrs Burberrys agreed to suspend, during the war, their decision to not re-employ in their Reading factory trade unionists who went on strike, unless they resigned from the union.' This allowed the strikers, if they wanted, to be re-instated.

It was not only the working men and women who took such action. In February, the Reading Tribunal refused to hear cases. They complained that, at the Berkshire Appeals Tribunal, the military won four out of every five Reading cases. At one sitting, every military appeal was allowed while every appeal by an employer, or a personal appeal by an individual was dismissed without what they felt was a proper hearing. After careful consideration, they informed the Local Government Board of the facts and declared that, as they were wasting their time, they would adjourn for a week to wait for a reply. This did not immediately materialise. As a result, four of the nine continued to refuse to sit until there had been an inquiry. The tribunals did, in fact, start again.

The foregoneness of the conclusion of some applications to the tribunal is obvious. Simonds, the brewers, had put in a block application claiming exemption for thirty-one men who were the only men passed for general service in a staff of 500. They explained that most were coopers who required physical fitness; without them, the business might have to close. The Military Representative had already arranged for eight of them to go at once, seven on 1 June and the rest on 1 July, but with leave to apply for a further exemption. His decision was confirmed, but two of the last sixteen had to leave by 1 July.

Sometimes it was not only the military who thought that a man should go. Eighteen-year-old N. Harrison, a solicitor's clerk, applied for exemption on the grounds of continual ill-health. Although he had two medical certificates, Sir Cameron Gull on the tribunal suggested

that his health would be enormously improved in the army. He was given three months' exemption and leave to apply again.

Any man who was able was needed to replace the losses at Arras and to build reserves for the coming Ypres offensive. Reading and district suffered considerable losses in both battles with lengthy casualty lists of the dead, wounded and missing. For many whose sons were missing, there was nothing to do but hope and write a letter to the paper asking for any information. Number '37582 Private L.C. Powell of the Royal Berkshire Regiment, Mill Lodge, Sonning, was wounded on April 29th at Oppy, and has been missing since that date. Naturally his mother and father are very anxious for information. He was wounded on July 24th, 1916, in the big advance.' He is listed as died on 4 May and is buried at Tournai, nearly forty miles away from where he was wounded.

Unveiling the shrine at St Giles Church, Southampton Street on Sunday, 25 March. Such shrines were contentious and generated many letters to the papers.

Reg Paul, now a Lance-Corporal, at home after recovering from his wound.

Another who served in the same Royal Berks battalion as Powell was Lance Corporal Welch of Swallowfield who won the Victoria Cross. Born at Stratfield Saye, this regular soldier had already been wounded five times before the Arras offensive. He 'entered an enemy trench and killed one man after a severe hand-to-hand struggle. Then, armed only with an empty revolver, he chased four of the enemy across the open and captured them single-handed. He handled his machine-gun with the utmost fearlessness, and more than once went into the open, exposed to heavy fire, to search for and collect ammunition and spare parts in order to keep his guns in action, which he succeeded in doing for over five hours, until wounded by a shell.'

Reading Gaol appeared in the news again, this time for a crime committed hundreds of miles away in Ireland. In February, four Sinn

Can anyone spot Reg Paul at the table? He was recovering from a wound in a Liverpool hospital.

Feiners were court-martialled. They were charged with acts at a concert intended to cause disaffection by singing a seditious song entitled 'Who fears to speak of Easter Week', and by seditious recitations called 'Vengeance' and 'Reading Gaol'. These were not the first political prisoners. In July the previous year, thirty-seven Sinn Feiners had arrived, but by Christmas they had been repatriated.

With coal more expensive and not freely available, many families suffered from the severe cold at the end of January. On Saturday, 27 January, 7° of frost were recorded in Forbury Gardens, on Sunday 7°, Monday 9° and Tuesday 12°. It became warmer during the remainder of the week. For the first time for many years, the Kennet was partly frozen and a barge was ice-bound. The Loddon too was in a similar condition. At Coley Park there was skating, which was charged at 3d for the benefit of the Red Cross.

The fuel shortage also caused problems for local schools. The George Palmer School recorded that on 11 January work was somewhat disorganised 'owing to the very low temperature in all classrooms. With the exception of the babies' room there was an entire absence of artificial heat owing to a shortage in the supply of coke.' Nearly a month later, the school was closed because there was no heating. Even as late as April, the weather and lack of fuel were still causing problems. The attendance was low because of the cold and snow and the lack of heating meant the timetable could not be followed.

Once again Licensed Victuallers were under pressure from two directions, both from teetotallers and also from brewers. They felt that teetotal faddists were attempting to crush them out of business under the guise of patriotism when they had long-played an honourable part in the history of the nation. The second concern was the threatened price rise for a pint of beer. Charging more than 3d would deprive the working man of his drink. The brewers were aware of the increasing restrictions on their core ingredients and saw a price rise as the only way to reduce demand to a level that they were allowed to produce. A highly unpopular alternative was to close pubs a couple of days a week. Naturally beer prices increased.

In January the renewal of Public House licences had been discussed by the members of the Reading Licensing Committee. Most of the 262 licences were renewed. Six needed further consideration: The Grapes, The Royal Exchange, The Castle, The Wallingford Arms, the

Oddfellows' Lodge and The Bricklayers' Arms. One licence was not renewed: that of Mr. F. Miller, licensee of The Clifton on Caversham Road. He was not a fit and proper person to hold a licence because he had been convicted of selling intoxicating liquor during prohibited hours in contravention of the Central Control Board regulations. At the end of the meeting, held a week after the cases below, and in the same week as the police figures for crime in 1916, the chairman was pleased to report that Reading was the second most sober town in England and Wales after Cardiff.

Shortly after their licence was renewed, Mrs Kate Tipping of The Redan and John Belcher of The Red Lion had committed offences contrary to the regulations prohibiting the sale of alcohol to wounded soldiers. They were caught out by undercover Military Police dressed as ASC men. Both had served wounded soldiers not wearing the correct uniform and had allowed treating. Mrs Tipping was fined £5 for allowing treating and £1 for the other offence. Mr Belcher was fined £1 for each offence.

An Act of Parliament limited the quantity of beer produced to 26,000,000 standard barrels in the year, or 20½ gallons per head, less than ½ pint a day. The intention was both to restrict consumption and to raise money for the Exchequer. At a revenue rate of 24s a standard barrel, it would raise £30,600,000. The increase to 25s during the year, and further monies from licensing duties on pubs plus other associated revenue, meant that beer duty amounted to three farthings per person, per day.

Aldershot Command, which covered East Berkshire, then proposed that at least half the licensed houses should be closed. This was designed to remove temptation from the many soldiers in the area rather than on account of conduct issues. Looking to the future and a time, hopefully soon, when the army would be demobilised, soldiers would return from the front with pockets full of money. They needed protecting from temptation, and fewer pubs would benefit the soldier. Licensees and brewers were not convinced and asked for time to consider this drastic proposal. Wokingham and Guildford dismissed the suggestion, claiming that they had no power to make such a decision.

The dilution of beer and its reduced availability did not stop drunkenness in the town and in one sitting, the magistrates fined three residents for this offence. Emma Belcher, of 41 Cardigan Road, was

fined 5s for being drunk in London Road. Emily Sackley, of 14 Mundesley Street, was so drunk she could not walk or give account of herself when found in Chestnut Walk. She was bound over for twelve months and ordered to pay 4s costs. William Filmer of Lime Court was found guilty of being drunk in charge of a pair of horses and a van in Fobney Street. He had been spotted driving unsteadily and fell over when he got off the van. As it was a first offence, he was admonished and fined 10s.

Further price rises and quality reduction were obvious to those who followed commodity prices and read Food Controller Orders. From 1 April the amount of brewing material available was reduced to half that used in the year ending 30 September 1914. At that time the average price per quarter of barley was 27s 2d; in 1915 it was 37s 4d and in 1916 it had reached 53s 6d. Regardless of the quality or price, little decrease in demand was expected by the brewers, so from 2 April prices went up 5d for a pint of mild and to 7d for stout and bitter. The reduction in production to 10,000,000 barrels a year was a significant decrease. In simple terms, where twenty-six customers had been served in 1916, there was only enough for ten in 1917.

'Those who drink beer will have it whatever the price may be' seemed to be true. People still got drunk and appeared in court. There were three cases in one week in June. George Smith, of 5 Silver Street, described by the chairman as a nuisance to the borough, was fined 10s for being drunk in Silver Street. Richard Hatton, who when found asleep in a doorway in London Street, was in a drunken condition, and afterwards was violent and used foul language, was fined 10s or seven days. William Cummings of 8 Highgrove Terrace was fined 20s for using obscene language in Silver Street while drunk.

Another reduction was in the quantity of paper available. Newspapers were restricted to a third of their pre-war level. As a result only pre-ordered copies of the local papers could be printed.

Reading, in common with most other towns, suffered from a shortage of potatoes during March. At many shops they could not be purchased and, on Saturday 17 March, shops were besieged and supplies quickly ran out. Tempers ran so high that police had to be called to disperse the crowd when an Oxford Road grocer refused to sell the potatoes he had because they were for the army. The shortage was caused by the army buying up all the supplies.

The Cycling & Motoring correspondent of the *Chronicle* advised readers of another potential shortage. Bicycles should be bought before they became unavailable. Output was down, demand was high and materials were in short supply. He also warned of an imminent petrol shortage.

As had been predicted by the coal merchants Stevens & Co., coal was difficult to buy and more expensive. Although the re-opening of Arthur Hill's Swimming Baths to the public was good news, the lack of coal meant it offered a cold water experience only.

The shortage of coal was good news for the Reading Gas Company which had already announced record profits and was keen for more business – but only, it claimed, because it was patriotic to use gas. Their advert read: 'Fuel economy. Be patriotic! It is a simple fact of patriotism to use gas instead of coal for cooking. There is a serious shortage of coal, and of labour for its transport and delivery. Moreover, you actually help to win the war by using gas. Some of the by-products of gas manufacture are essential to the making of high explosives – not to mention indispensable dyes and drugs of which others are the raw material. When coal is used for cooking, all the raw material goes up the chimney – "vanishes in smoke". Use gas therefore – but be sure you learn to use it economically.'

In February, Germany began unrestricted submarine warfare. With so much food imported, prices continued to rise as supplies were reduced by increasing shipping losses. Losses in April totalled over 300 ships, a quarter of all tonnage using British ports. In February and March 1917, 85,000 tons of sugar failed to arrive and at one point wheat and flour stocks stood at just two months' supply. Food rationing was clearly on the cards in order to equalise availability if suggested voluntary measures did not work.

The Headmaster of Reading School, in his annual speech explained how, apart from providing soldiers, the school was helping the war effort. 'Another contribution the school has made to the war was in the workshops, from which they had turned out requisites for the hospitals such as splints, crutches and bed-rests. In the way of assisting food production the boys helped last Easter on the allotments and during the summer holidays all the boys of about 16 would be helping in farm work of some kind.'

To boost production further, the Berkshire War Agricultural

Executive Committee informed farmers that soldiers would be available over the summer. As their number was limited, early application was essential. Farmers could also apply for soldiers not in category A to help with the shearing. A month later, farmers were told of another pool of labour: 'Public and Secondary Schoolmasters and boys, Ministers of Religion, Civil servants, etc., will be available during the months of August and September, a few during term time, for harvest and other temporary farm work.'

By the end of June, the soldiers were at the barracks ready to help farmers. The Agricultural Committee had set the rates of pay: for the hay harvest, 5s per day for a man who lives out, but 2s 6d with board and lodging, with 6d an hour overtime after ten hours; for the corn harvest, 6s per day or 3s 6d with board and lodging and 6d an hour overtime. All rates were inclusive and were paid whether wet or fine. Unfortunately, most of the skilled men released had little or no experience of agriculture. They had other skills though many showed considerable intelligence which allowed them to be trained quickly.

Soldiers released by a Royal Artillery unit to bring in the crops somewhere in west Berkshire.

One story is sufficient to show how seriously or not the military took their obligation. A local farmer with some young horses to train asked if he could have the assistance of soldiers who understood horses. Two were duly sent. 'One had been a dock labourer and was therefore used to "Sea horses", and the other was a bookmakers' clerk who was accustomed to seeing them galloping past him down the course.' No doubt both men and horses were quickly trained.

There was a limit to how much untrained workers could do, so in order to ensure a successful 1918 harvest, it was decided to release soldiers who had worked on a farm. Horses with soldier ploughmen were let out for fixed periods if a farmer was materially increasing his corn planting; about a month for each additional eight acres, if he could not achieve this with his own workers, or for shorter, more restricted, periods for other farmers who wanted to plant more wheat.

As a result of this availability, ministry figures for Berkshire showed an increase in the area to be used for corn (wheat, barley, oats, rye, beans and peas) in 1918, thereby reducing reliance on imports and shipping space. There were 135,000 acres in production, an increase of 38,000 over 1916, of which 33,000 acres were permanent grass that needed to be ploughed.

Reducing the number of pests would cut food loss. The Food Production Department urged farmers to reduce the number of rookeries and urged tenants to destroy rabbits by shooting and trapping. They suggested forming rat and sparrow clubs, hiring professional rat catchers and rewarding other persons at rates which should not exceed: 1s per dozen rats' tails; 3d per dozen heads of fully fledged house sparrows; 2d per dozen of unfledged house sparrows; 1d per dozen house sparrows' eggs. There was no money from the government; it was to come from interested parties and voluntary sources, but some might come from district and parish councils if they felt it appropriate. A year later, rat damage to food was estimated to be £40,000,000.

Swallowfield Parish Council took the matter seriously and, after meeting with local farmers, formed a club offering 2s for a dozen rats' tails. The district and parish councils funded two-thirds, with the remainder coming from public subscriptions. In the first year £8 15s was paid out, over 1,000 rats' tails with fifty in one batch from a Swallowfield mill. Shinfield and Finchampstead also formed clubs.

Dryland Haslam, Secretary of the Reading Chamber of Commerce, told residents that it was 'everyone's duty to make voluntary food restrictions a success'. There was no available labour for compulsory rationing and no great hardship was being imposed. The suggested weekly allowance of 4 pounds of bread (or 3 of flour), 2½ pounds of meat and ¾pound of sugar was ample if wise use was made of equally good but unrestricted foods.

Fish was offered as an alternative to meat but not all of it was attractive to the palates of the good folk of Reading. John Eighteen the fishmonger, responded to the Food Controllers' request to buy the pickled herrings available and purchased twenty tons. He soaked them for three or four days, changing the water four times a day. He sold out in two days but received many complaints that confirmed his view that herring did not suit the public in Reading. While possibly being suitable for the Midlands and north of England, the people of Berkshire would rather go without than eat herrings. In most parts of the country this was largely the case, even though the government suggested ways to remove the salt and even the taste. The suggestion was made that, as bacon was scarce grocers could sell the herrings.

The voluntary restrictions were straightforward and many goods were unrestricted to be freely purchased. Haslam explained what was expected and what could be substituted. The total amount of raw meat (and bone), bacon, poultry, rabbits and game should not exceed 2½ pounds. Bread, cakes, biscuits should not exceed 4 pounds per person per week. If flour was used, for every 1½ pounds, a 2 pound loaf had to be given up. The ¾pounds of sugar a week was for all purposes. Unrestricted substitutes for meat included fish, eggs, bones for soup, cheese, suet, lentils, peas and beans. Alternatives to wheat included oatmeal, barley meal, potatoes, rice, sago and tapioca. He finished his appeal for food economy by quoting Lord Derby: 'Stick it out – whatever the cost, whatever the privation, stick it out to the bitter end.'

In order to stop people evading any restrictions, further controls were put in place. To control food bought in hotels, restaurants, clubs, boarding houses and other public eating places a Public Meals Order laid down a scale of average quantities for each person as the basis on which each establishment was rationed (all weights in ounces):

Queues forming in May 1917 after the King's proclamation.

	Meat	Sugar	Bread	Flour
Breakfast	2	2/7	2	Nil
Luncheon (including middle day dinner)	5	2/7	2	1
Dinner (including supper and meat tea)	5	2/7	2	1
Tea	nil	2/7	2	nil

Two ounces of poultry or game were reckoned as one of meat, and all weights included the bone when delivered by the butcher. No account was taken of any meal between 9.30 pm and 5 am. Meat was regarded as butchers' meat, sausage, ham, pork, bacon, venison, and preserved and potted meats.

While this was good for the country and shipping space, it was far from good news for butchers in Reading and across the country. Their trade fell by between twenty and thirty per cent unlike their working expenses which continued to rise with a lower turnover. As a result of conscription, shortages and voluntary food control,

Having a meatless day to many meant eating fish.

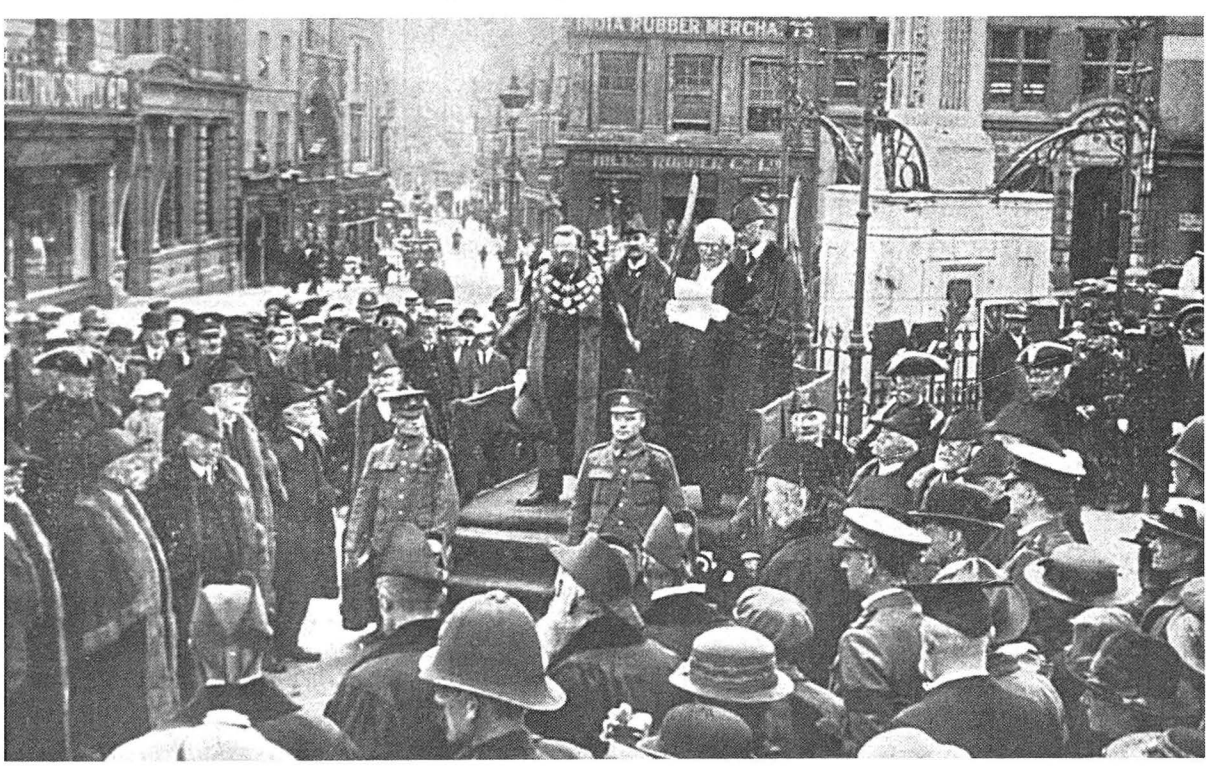
nearly 300 butchers had closed in the previous two years. Sales of beef, mutton, pork and poultry had all dropped in February by twenty-five per cent and, with better cuts costing so much more, there was a shortage of the cheaper cuts.

In a lecture at the Town Hall an eminent expert on nutrition, Dr J. Campbell, told his audience that they did not need to eat so much food and that beer was good for them. He told them that 1/5 of the food eaten was surplus and unnecessary and cost the country over £120,000,000 a year. He said that a man performing an ordinary day's work could live well on 8oz of lean meat, 3oz of butter or margarine, and 1½ pounds of carbohydrates. Sedentary workers needed only two meals a day and a light lunch, though those who did hard manual work required three good meals a day. The way to keep warm before going out in the cold was to drink coffee, not tea as it contained an oil that dilated the blood vessels.

On 24 May the King's proclamation on food economy was read in the Market Place, by the Town Clerk, Mr W. Clutterbuck, who was accompanied by the Mayor.

WHO SAID
WAR PRICES
ENGLAND IS STILL THE CHEAPEST COUNTRY TO LIVE IN LOOK YOU!
Excellent Back or Streaky Rashers
Sliced by Patent Machine.
Smoked 1/1 per lb.
Unsmoked 1/- per lb.
NOW DON'T SIT DOWN AND GROUSE BUT COME ALONG AND BUY.
We have enough for everybody.
World's Stores,
69, WHITLEY ST. & 87, WOKINGHAM RD.,
READING.

Were World's Stores being economical with the truth when they wrote they had enough for everyone? A common gripe was the difficulty in buying bacon in most shops.



He further informed them that, from an economic standpoint, malt liquors 'were the most nutritious of all the beverages'. They contained minerals and vitamins, sugars and 'proteids'. They had a two-fold action, providing food for the body and at the same time stimulating the appetite and digestion. Beer was as good as milk for energy, and its manufacture created by-products that could be used for animal foodstuffs and in foods such as compressed soup squares.

It was not only just imported food that increased in price. There was much comment about milk prices, now around twice the 1914 cost. Fortunately for the public, the government did eventually step in to fix the price, with fines to prevent higher prices being charged. The government provided some relief by reducing the price of a standard loaf from 11d to 9d.

Food rationing was to be a constant issue. The February proposal for voluntary rationing, each person to limit consumption to four pounds of bread, two and half pounds of meat and twelve ounces of sugar a week, met with little success. 'The target was to reduce the consumption of bread by a quarter.' As a result of its failure, compulsory rationing would follow later in the year. Before then, further commodities would be price-restricted under DORA restrictions. Other rules and regulations were introduced that certainly saved food but equally failed to make the residents of Reading any happier. What sort of wedding would it be without throwing rice? How miserable would life be without luxury chocolate? What would afternoon tea be like with only two ounces of bread or cake? Food queues now became common.

The government's tightening of its control on food supplies was clearly shown by the notice on the front page of the *Chronicle* of 25 May – 'Enforcement of food control orders. The council are required to enforce within the borough the following food orders: The Brewers Sugar Order 1917, The Potatoes Main Crop (prices) Order, The Price of Milk Order, The Feeding of Game Order, The Sugar (confectionary) Order, The Bread Order, The Swedes (prices) Order, The Food (conditions of sale) Order, The Tea (net weight) Order, The Manufacture of Flour and Bread Order, The Public Meals Order, The Cake and Pastry Order, The Wheat, Rye and Rice (restriction) Order and The Maize, Barley and Oats (restriction) Order and other orders to be issued from time to time.' Under orders such as these, one

member of the public was fined £2 for selling seed potatoes to someone without a licence.

Tightening controls and a sugar shortage were bad news for home-produced jam. Any private grower who wanted to preserve their fruit on their own premises for domestic consumption had to write to London for an application form that might get them a larger sugar ration. The key words were – private grower. The fruit had to come from the grower's own garden or allotment and only the person who grew the fruit could claim the sugar allowance. There was no spare sugar unless ordered at 7d a pound. The ration was ¾ pound for each pound of fruit grown and was only available to those who had been verified by a magistrate, clergyman, minister or other responsible householder of the parish. The allocation was over-applied for in two weeks.

Shortages of sugar and food generally feature in this childhood recollection, recalled in the 1990s. 'Food became scarce during the war. If it had not been for the garden we would have been worse off... summer holidays when there was just potatoes and runner beans for dinner, day after day (with a little bit of bacon for Dad). The bread was terrible stuff, with little to put on it except Maypole margarine, for which Mother queued...or home-made jam (rhubarb or blackberry), made with insufficient sugar so that it didn't keep well.'

DORA prosecutions increased as regulation tightened. Two April cases concerned killing a pigeon, and visiting Reading. A fifteen-year-old boy was charged with unlawfully killing a homing pigeon. The boy's father had reimbursed the owner. In normal times this would probably have been enough, but this was an offence under DORA. He had shot the bird with an air rifle he had received for Christmas. The Bench described this as a very dangerous weapon in the hands of a boy who had no right to be carrying it without a licence. He was bound over for six months and told 'not to play games such as this'. The gun was confiscated for destruction by the army and his father was ordered to pay costs.

In the second DORA case, Ada Pilgrim, of 77 Mount Street, was charged on remand with having failed to comply with the conditions of an order made under the DORA Regulations, prohibiting her from residing in or frequenting the borough of Reading, after 1 April, 1916. In her defence she told the Bench she had been to see her brother who

was home from the front and that, since she had left Reading, she had done nothing wrong and had worked in munitions. She had intended to leave the next day to her work at Hayes. The police did not deny her statement so the case was dismissed but with the warning she must not visit Reading again.

February saw a big push on war loans and, by the 15th, Reading had purchased £1,200,000 and by March £1,483,213. Savings associations were formed to buy them and the seventy-five of them then in existence had purchased 7,000. This, together with those sold at the Savings Bureau, made a total of 14,000 certificates at 15s 6d each. To encourage their employees to save, some companies ran schemes to aid their purchase. Allen & Simmonds, Engineers, took £2,600 of war loans for their employees and gave them two years to pay them back, making a profit of 4s 6d to the employee. Huntley & Palmers also ran a programme; they paid the first pound of each employee's purchase.

Everything had to be saved, money, food and then the attention turned to waste. The local Waste Saving Campaign was designed to increase the wealth of Reading, serve national interests, and save lives. There had been interest in the 'kadaver' utilisation establishments of the German army – a kadaver is an animal carcase in German but was taken to mean 'cadaver' by the British Press – to fuel propaganda stories about human corpses being boiled down for manufacturing use. The object of the campaign was to stop waste. Any old cast iron could be turned into shell cases. Woollen goods could become blankets and spare cotton would make paper. Bones and fat yielded glycerine for cordite manufacture and bones could be ground to make fertiliser.

An immediate and practical home scheme was to separate and keep for collection bones, fat and grease, giving Lady Anderson of Wimbledon's experiment as an example. She collected the washing-up water from her five-person household, let it cool down and over a five day period skimmed off nearly a pound of solid, pure, white fat.

Voluntary local salvage organisations needed to be set up to help professional waste collectors. Teachers were asked to impress upon the children the need for waste saving. Boy Scouts were urged to help with collecting in the same way as Girl Guides collected waste paper – this was essential as imports were running at 10 per cent of need. Money raised by the Girl Guides' paper collection went to charity. In just

twelve months of collecting, they were able to give £90 to the National Relief Fund.

During autumn, children collected chestnuts at the request of the Minister of Munitions and the Food Controller. They were useful in certain industrial processes as a substitute for grain. One ton of chestnuts released half a ton on grain for human consumption.

At the start of June, consumers in Reading were 'urgently requested to avoid undue use of or waste of water, particularly in the direction of useless watering of lawns and shrubberies etc., by means of hosepipes and sprinklers, or by permitting leakages from their taps to remain unattended to'. The waste or misuse of water was a punishable offence under clause 17 of the 1863 Waterworks Act, with a penalty not exceeding £5 for every offence.

While there was much to complain of about the manpower shortage, the cost of goods or the shortages, one business was doing very well. The amount of coal gas used in Reading had gone up by 1.6 per cent to 12,415,400 cubic feet. The increase was due to the addition of 505 cookers and 1,087 gas fires to the system and 335 new consumers, making a total of 20,556 households and businesses using gas. An expenditure of £125,498 and a profit of £142,344 allowed a dividend payment of 5 per cent, £41,685.

After record profits and encouraging consumers to use more gas, as long as it was used sensibly, the Gas Company in November issued a warning. 'Owing to the large increase in the consumption, and the difficulty in obtaining materials, etc., for the manufacture and distribution of gas, the Reading Gas Company REQUEST their CONSUMERS, and particularly those who have gas fires, and gas cookers, to do all that is possible to ECONOMISE in the USE of GAS.' After providing instructions on how to boil water, cook more efficiently and heat a room economically, the company announced that the price of coke was unchanged and was in good supply.

A forerunner of modern-day sat-nav problems was the court case in which Berkshire County Council sought to recover £6 7s 6d from Portholme Aerodrome Ltd, of Huntingdon, for not reading a map carefully. The company had to transport a fully-assembled seaplane minus its engine to Coley Aerodrome. It was a large object to transport and very few roads or bridges in the county were wide enough to let it pass. On 7 December 1915, it arrived at Broadwater Bridge at Hurst

and could not get over. With the proviso as little damage as possible was done, permission was granted to remove two or three courses of bricks. However, when the driver tried to cross he tore down the rearside of the bridge parapet as too few bricks had been removed. It was also necessary to cut down many tree branches along the remainder of the journey. It took eleven hours to travel the seven miles to the 'Merry Maidens'. Judgement was given for the defendant.

Rather more successful than the Volunteer Regiment recruitment drives in early 1918 was the request for cars to be at the disposal of the military in the event of an invasion. By May, a Volunteer Motor Squadron had been formed with headquarters in Friar Street in Reading. Little was achieved in the rest of the county, even with the offer of ten gallons of petrol a month plus extra for parades and when on duty. A number of women drivers offered but could not join because it was classed as combatant service.

With little to laugh about, one regular writer in the newspaper tried to be humorous – the reader can decide whether this was achieved. Every county has places of residence suited to certain people:

Baulking – for shirkers
Bray – for Socialists
Catmore – for gossips
Cold Ash – for coal merchants
Cookham – for cooks
Earley – for the industrious
Goosey – for nervous people
Inkpen – for clerks
Littleworth – for politicians
Marcham – for recruits
Milton – for poets
Newbury – for undertakers
Pangbourne – for invalids
Swallowfield – for food hogs
Wantage – for juveniles
Warfield – for soldiers
Wargrave – for peace mongers

Is this relevant, appropriate or suitable for a history of the Great War?

I think so because it shows that century-old humour is little different from now, that really little had changed in people's minds and that no matter how bad the situation, people always turn to humour.

With so much change going on, it is interesting to read the court reports to see human nature went on as before. Albert Wilkins of Weldale Street was summoned for assaulting James Randall of 2 Hope Street. Wilkins hit him in the face and knocked him down. As he rose, he was knocked down again and kicked on the side of the head. Wilkins admitted assaulting the defendant and was fined 16s or seven days'. Cycle dealer, John Jackman of 66 London Street, was 'summoned for obstructing the footway by six bikes'. He was ordered to pay costs. Pelham Body of Whitley Knoll was summoned for driving a motor-car to the danger of the public. The defendant was driving a Red Cross van along the Oxford Road when he met John Gardner, of 48 Edinburgh Road, who was driving a number of cattle. Gardner was unable to clear the animals out of the way and four sheep were run over, of which three had to be slaughtered. Alleged to have been driving at 15 mph, the defence said the cattle were on the wrong side of the road, that Gardner had failed to get them on the right side and that the car was only travelling at 9 mph and was doing 2 mph when it hit the sheep. The case was dismissed.

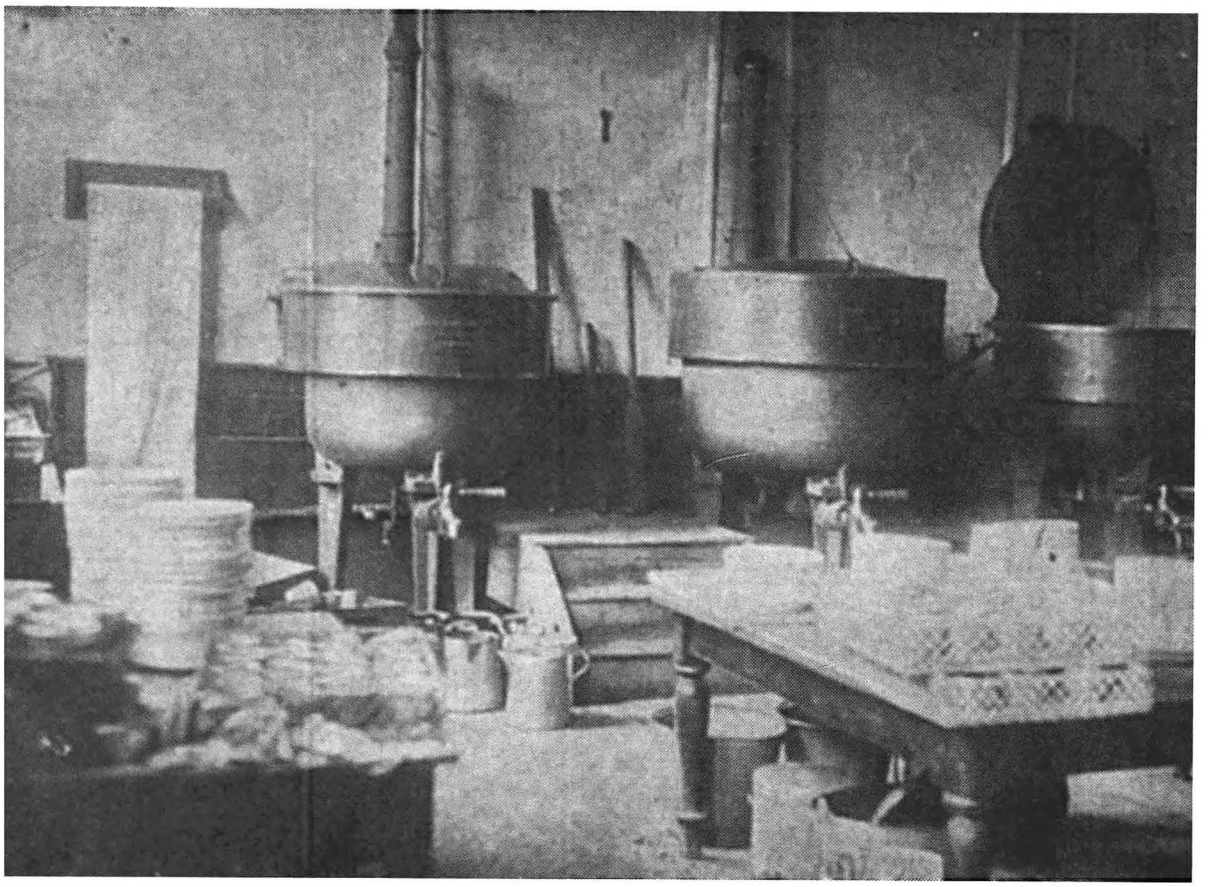
A case that we today would consider to be far more serious now than it was then was that of George North of Pangbourne Street who admitted assaulting his wife. The complainant said she had called him to get up for work but he said he had not slept and should not go. She called him again and he got into a temper and struck her in the face with his fists. He had on several occasions previously assaulted her. She was afraid of him and his fits of temper. The defendant expressed sorrow at what he had done and said that his wife got into a temper and that caused him to become upset. He was fined £1 and bound over for six months.

Two cases which featured windows had the same end and for the same reasons. Edith Appleby created a disturbance in Kaill's Fish Shop on Caversham Road and was ejected. She smashed the front window with her fist. Michael Cleary was knocking on the door of every house in Elgar Road where he saw a lighted window and shouted obscene language. Both of no fixed abode, they were each fined £1. Appleby also had to replace the glass, costing a further £2.

As in previous years, there was an inquest on a newly-born female baby. This one was found in a hedge at Holder's Nursery, adjoining Erleigh Court Lane. A brown paper parcel in the hedge was noticed by gardener Richard Wright of 44 Collis Street. He removed it to the Nursery where the foreman, Mr Butler cut the string and unwrapped it to discover the body of a newly-born child. The cold, dry corpse was wrapped in a woman's under-vest and three layers of paper. Dr Young believed the child had breathed and had a separate existence. It had been dead about twenty-four hours when found. The inquest was adjourned for the police to make enquiries, but nothing was discovered and the verdict was 'found dead'. Later in the year, an open verdict was returned on a baby, wrapped in newspaper and brown paper, that was found floating in the Thames near Kennetmouth by a boy fishing.

Food and beer were seldom out of the news. In late May, the mayor sent a personal appeal to 3,000 households with an honour-bound card to display regarding food economy. The Education Authority gave the Communal Kitchen Committee three kitchens to use but, because the

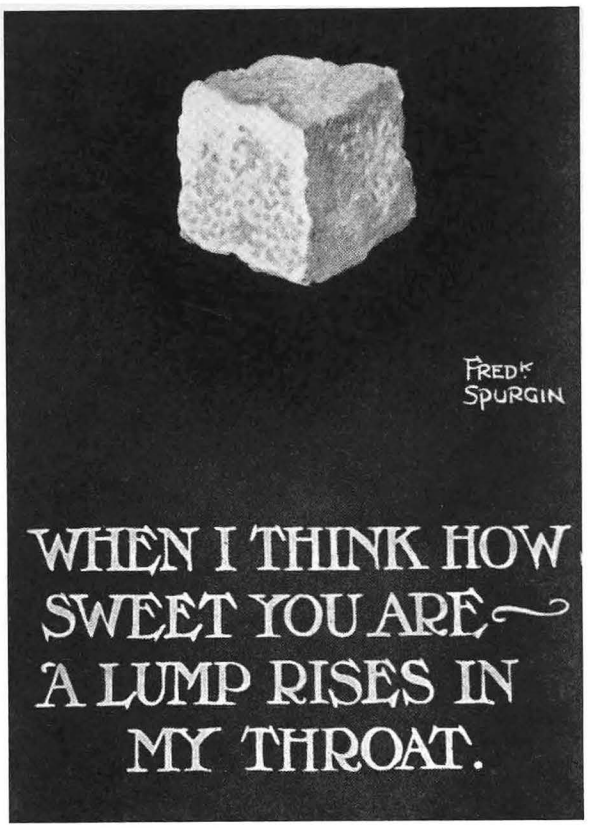
Across the country the National Food Saving Committee aided the setting up of communal kitchens. To help combat food shortages the Education Committee gave the Communal Kitchen Committee three kitchens but no money to help run them. This is the British School in Southampton Street run by Mr F.W. Marsh and a staff of eight.



The communal kitchen in the British School on Southampton Street showing the steam coppers.

scheme was voluntary, there was no money to run them. They were the outcome of the National Food Saving Committee and were established all over the country. They were designed to save money, food, heating and time and the public demonstrations, at 175 Friar Street, of serial cooking were keenly attended.

When the first kitchen opened towards the end of August, with a £100 loan from the council, it showed itself to be self-sustaining and profit-making in just two weeks. It meant that people could go to work and pick up a meal for the family on the way home, by simply leaving their own bowls at the kitchen on the way to work. Its motto was 'Waste not, want not'. The bill of fare was so wholesome that many middle-class people came to buy food. In the first week 2,070 portions sold, in the second week 2,508 with a record 572 meals served on the Thursday of week two. In fourteen days 1,300 steak puddings were sold so it was kept on the menu permanently. No sugar was used, only corn syrup.



Is this about a person or the sugar lump? The shortage of sugar meant that much fruit was wasted because it could not be tinned or made into jam. It was also classed as a staple part of the diet.

In 1915 some Boards of Guardians had decided that they could save money by insisting that tramps work if they wanted lodging and that they stayed for two days without release. Both had reduced the number of visits and saved money. In a further attempt to reduce costs, the Vagrancy Committee decided to close the casual wards at Abingdon, Amersham, Bradfield, Hungerford, Maidenhead, Newbury, Oxford, Reading, Wokingham and Woodstock but to keep Henley open. The representative from Henley was of the opinion that they should be closed to save money and because you could do nothing with tramps. 'They are vicious and idle...disloyal and unpatriotic.'

Once again, for the second quarter of the year, the Acting Chief Constable reported that crime showed a decrease overall but there was an increase in the more serious crimes with indictable offence up from fifty-one to fifty-nine. Compared to the same quarter in 1916 the number of non-indictable offences had fallen considerably from 422 to 383. No juvenile had been flogged and only two had been sent to Reformatory School. Examples of the rise in more serious crimes are the two similar cases, which follow.

Since the start of the war sex had barely intruded into the local courtrooms. Then in a short space it appeared twice. The first case concerned Beatrice Town, of 220 Kennetside, wife of soldier Nelson Town, who was charged with keeping a disorderly house. Mrs Bessie Smith, a next-door neighbour, said there had been many rows when parents came for their daughters and that this had gone on for three to four months. The defendant had been a very respectable woman before the war but in 1915 the police received complaints that she was behaving badly and taking too much drink. At first she improved, but in November 1915 there were more complaints and she was cautioned to behave better. Her separation allowance was stopped on the grounds of immorality so she obtained work in a factory. In December 1916 she was sent to prison for three weeks but on release continued to lead an immoral life. She told the magistrates that she wanted to change and work in a munitions factory. The mayor said 'the magistrates considered the case a very bad one indeed. Not only had the prisoner led an immoral life herself but the great difficulty in this case was that she tried to lead others to do so by enticing them to become as she was.' They felt keenly that the town needed protecting from this sort of behaviour and sent her to prison for two calendar months with hard labour.

Another lady charged with keeping a disorderly house was eighteen-year-old Eva Hargan of 5 Elm Court, Coley. It was alleged that there was a regular flow of soldiers going into the house, sometimes with women. A lot of drink was taken into the house. Many were wounded soldiers who went in the afternoon. A young girl had stayed in the house for a while, and another young girl, named Florrie, who was a known loose character, was seen entering with soldiers and the accused. It was a serious offence but the magistrates were lenient because they had not seen her before. She was given the choice of twenty-eight days' or a £5 fine. When she asked for time to pay, she was told she would be released as soon as the fine was paid.

Probably the worst alcohol-related case appeared before the Bench at the end of July. Alfred Plummer, of 16 Lavender Street, and Lily Applegate, of 42 Oxford Road, were charged with being drunk and disorderly in Wokingham. They were found drunk outside the Town Hall by Inspector Haddrell. He followed them into The Bush and told the landlady not to serve them. The Reading bus arrived but there were

so many people that they couldn't get on. Plummer abused the conductress and Applegate sat on the step and refused to move. She was pushed off and was verbally abusive. Both then walked along Broad Street, pushing people out of the way. When arrested they resisted and used abominable language, kicking and pushing the police. In the cells the man was a nuisance, ringing the bell until 1 am, and Applegate struggled with the police. Plummer pleaded not guilty and was fined 15s. Applegate pleaded guilty and was fined 10s. She was also charged with attempted suicide but the charge was dismissed, despite the fact that, in the cells, she had threatened to take her own life and made several attempts to do so by taking off most of her clothes and endeavouring to smother or strangle herself with them. Even when she was handcuffed behind her back for her own protection, she threw herself violently on the floor and placed her head in a vessel in the cell, causing her to need artificial respiration. The divisional surgeon, Dr Bokenham, said that she was very drunk!

To help combat poor-quality child care, Reading participated in the National Baby Week held from 1 to 7 July. The week's aim was to highlight ways to reduce the high rate of infant mortality. It pulled no punches with its statements: every minute a baby dies in the UK; in 1915 nine soldiers and twelve babies died every hour; in 1915 89,477 children died in England and Wales under 1; out of every 1,000 babies born, eleven die during the first twenty-four hours, twenty-two during the first week and thirty-six in the first month; out of every 1,000 babies born, 250 die before birth or in the first year. The causes were simple to identify, the remedy more difficult to apply: bad housing, improper feeding, the mother's ignorance and the difficulty in obtaining pure milk.

In the third quarter of the year came Reading's biggest reported crime, one also associated with loose women. Ernest Millard, cellar man for Arthur Cooper, Wine & Spirit Merchant of 28 Market Place, was charged with stealing two casks of sixteen gallons of brandy, a three gallon jar of gin, a four gallon jar of rum, a three gallon jar of scotch, twenty-one ½ bottles of Champagne and twelve bottles of Champagne, valued at £69 18s (over £3,000 at present prices). Millard had been discharged from the army after 142 days as not being likely to make an efficient soldier. He pleaded guilty to receiving the goods but not taking them. He had been previously seen by the police giving

bottles of whisky and brandy to loose women. The charge was changed to feloniously receiving the property, and the accused received four months imprisonment as a common criminal.

As in 1916, another Reading man was not prepared to join the army. Although the verdict was 'found drowned', it was intimated that it was suicide. Thirty-eight-year-old Sydney Beard, of 27 Upper Crown Street, was found in the Thames near the promenade. He had been called for military service and passed as fit for UK service. Previously he had declared that he did not want to go into the army and that he had jaundice, which the autopsy failed to show. He had then disappeared.

At the other extreme was Private G. Howes of 16 Queen's Cottages. He had been invalided out of the Royal Berks three times since the war started and was in hospital again in August 1917. He had joined the 8th Battalion, Royal Berks in October 1914, and was given the Silver War Badge and King's Certificate after he left the army for the third time in October 1916. He was still anxious to do his bit and had re-enlisted again for general service on 27 August.

Even with conscription, the RFC were still seeking volunteers. They advertised for applicants between the ages of seventeen years eight months (just before the draft age) and twenty-five for obvious reasons, only the young were wanted for flying duties as pilots and observers.

A fund reminder outside Heelas' premises in Broad Street. The money raised, £2,239 1s 11d, was used to equip a 'Berkshire Room' at the Star and Garter Home in Richmond.

G. R.
ROYAL FLYING CORPS.
RECRUITS, SKILLED or UNSKILLED (the latter must be Clerks, Storemen, &c.), men of almost any occupation, are wanted at once for the various branches of the Royal Flying Corps.
Men of military age and up to 50 years of age accepted. Corps rates of pay.
Apply personally or in writing to the nearest Recruiting Officer, who will put applicants into touch with the Special Recruiting Officer of the Royal Flying Corps in this district.
GOD SAVE THE KING.

Conscription was in force but the RFC wanted men before they were conscripted.

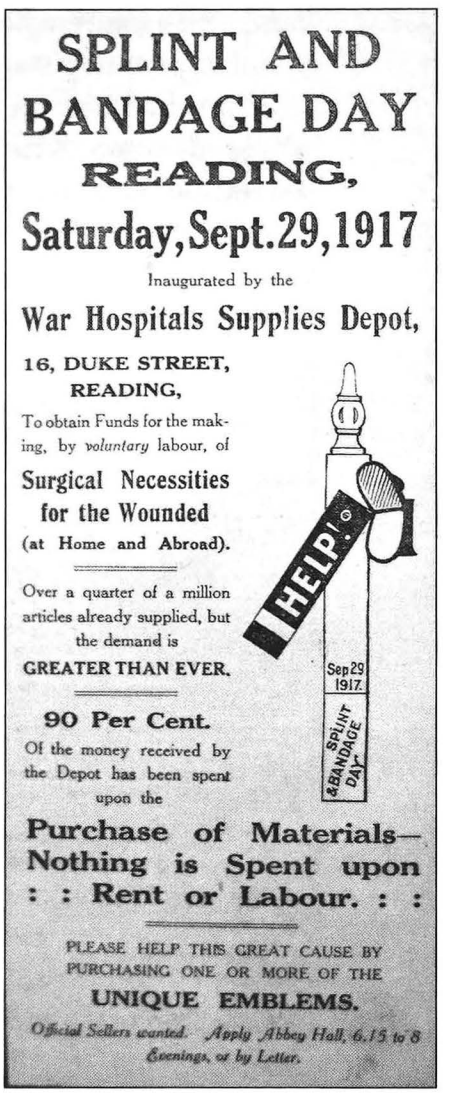
On 16 January, Lieutenant-General H. Lawson recommended using women in the army in France, emphasising their importance in munitions factories and the work they were doing for the war effort. The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was formed in July and had four functions: cookery, clerical, mechanical and miscellaneous. In October the women of Reading were asked to join: 1,000 were wanted at once and 40,000 by the end of the year. They were needed to replace men and would be employed in base camps at home and abroad. Minimum age was eighteen, twenty for service abroad. Applicants had to be strong, healthy and active.

A few things were not affected by the war. 'Despite the shortage of labour, skilled and otherwise, combined with other difficulties, consequent on the drastic times now being experienced, Mr Elisha Hicks, the noted rose specialist' of Hurst, continued to grow and exhibit his roses very successfully. At Southampton he was awarded the Challenge Cup for '36 roses distinct', a medal for the Best Bloom in the Show, plus six 1st and two 2nd prizes. At Ashford, for the second year running, he won 1st prize and the Gold Medal for the best exhibit

of roses in the show. And at the RHS shows, the Hurst roses had won six Silver Floral Medals, one Silver Banksian Medal, one silver-gilt medal and one bronze medal.

People still had fun on the river but that could be a dangerous place. In late August, three boys aged six, seven and twelve drowned in separate incidents: two in the Thames and one in Holybrook. There was a larger scale incident on the Thames at Caversham Bridge. A pleasure steamer stopped to set down and pick up passengers. There was a large number of persons waiting. They rushed to get a place and knocked a baby out its mother's arms. She dived in, followed by another family member, but all got into difficulty and had to be saved. In their excitement, those on the boat crowded to one side, putting it out of balance. A number of soldiers and boatmen grabbed the boat and managed to restore its equilibrium. However, in jumping from the top of the boat to the landing stage, several people were shaken and bruised.

Water claimed the life of the only son of Mr and Mrs W. Carter of Maubege, Church Road, Caversham. Twenty-one-year-old Donovan, serving with the RNAS, suffered a heart attack on entering the cold water of the River Nene near Peterborough when he went for a swim after work.


SPLINT AND BANDAGE DAY
READING,
Saturday, Sept. 29, 1917
Inaugurated by the
War Hospitals Supplies Depot,
16, DUKE STREET, READING,
To obtain Funds for the making, by voluntary labour, of
Surgical Necessities for the Wounded
(at Home and Abroad).
Over a quarter of a million articles already supplied, but the demand is
GREATER THAN EVER.
90 Per Cent.
Of the money received by the Depot has been spent upon the
Purchase of Materials—
Nothing is Spent upon : : Rent or Labour. : :
PLEASE HELP THIS GREAT CAUSE BY PURCHASING ONE OR MORE OF THE
UNIQUE EMBLEMS.
Official Sellers wanted. Apply Abbey Hall, 6.15 to 8 Evenings, or by Letter.
HELP!
Sep 29 1917.
SPLINT & BANDAGE DAY

Three months after the June collection, more money was needed to supply the wounded with the medical materials they needed.

Manor Farm, the local euphemism for Reading's sewage works, was a problem during the summer. The special committee appointed to investigate and report on complaints of smells from Manor Farm, had a report from the farm steward about tackling the problem. He had commenced treating the sewage with Chloros on 22 May for twenty-four days with 123 gallons a day costing £320. A second trial increased it to 125 gallons. The smell did not go away and, later in the year, further concerns were expressed about the

'farm', especially with regard to the housing development that was in its initial planning stages.

There had been a change in attitude since 1916. There was no official demonstration to mark the third anniversary of the war on 4 August although the churches held their customary united service. This change was put down to the difficulties of business and holiday time. It was however declared that there was no question of any slackening in local determination.

The TIME to buy your Summer Clothes is NOW, when the summer time is here, and not later, when the best days have gone. The OPPORTUNITY will be at
THE BIG SALE
WHICH COMMENCES
THURSDAY NEXT, JULY 19TH,
AT ALL THE SHOPS OF
E. JACKSON & SONS.
CLEAN STOCKS.
We believe in keeping our stock clean and bright. That is why we have our semi-annual Sales. The loss in profit is compensated by the gain in public esteem. The fact that everything is new and up-to-date—that our stock is always fresh and smart—brings us ever increasing trade. The Government restrictions prevent the usual issue of our wonderful Bargain Catalogues, still, as formerly, JACKSONS IS THE LAST WORD IN SALES.
If you want Clothing, Outfitting, Boots, etc., for Father and Son, Mother and Daughter, resolve to make an early call and secure the best bargains. The following is a brief mention of one or two of our various departments' special lines:—
70 pairs Gents' White and Grey FLANNEL TROUSERS. Sale Price 6/11 and 10/6.
130 Boys' RUGBY SUITS, sizes 6, 7, 8, 9. Sale Price 13/11. To-day's value 21/6.
60 Ladies' "HYDROTITE" RAINCOATS, new style, with belts. Sale Price 15/11.
The whole of the Hosiery and Hat Stock recently purchased from J. WELLS, of Caversham Road, we shall offer at startling prices. SEE WINDOWS.
BOOTS & SHOES.—See Windows for Bargains.
600 CLOTHES BRUSHES at 6½d. each. These are quite new and proper price should be 1/-
E. JACKSON & SONS.
OUR SHOPS ARE:—
JACKSONS' CORNERS,
8, High Street,
Duke Street Stores,
Telephone No. 249.
Prospect Street, Caversham,
21 & 23, Oxford St., Reading,
215, London Rd., Reading,
19, King's Road, Reading,
High Street, Bracknell,
Goring-on-Thames.
Telegrams—"EXCELSIOR, READING."

Then as now, the summer sale to make way for autumn clothing.

As the food situation tightened, Reading Town Council appointed a Food Committee to enforce the prices set by the Food Controller and register all grocers and other retailers of sugar. After 1 October, no unregistered retailer could sell sugar and, at the end of September, residents had to apply for sugar cards and were given a week to complete and return them. On receipt of the card, everyone had to register with a tradesman to buy sugar that would be allocated solely on the number of cards registered. Only one purchase a week was allowed. The scheme was fully operative by the end of the year.

The Food Controller nearly cast a blight on St Mary's, Castle Street, Sunday School treat: in order to comply with restrictions, the children were not provided with tea. However, they were blessed with lovely

weather and the sports were a great success. So everyone still had an enjoyable time.

The following report gives rise to the question: when it is obvious that the parents are so proud of their contribution to war, why would they not give all their children's names to the papers? The Buxcey family of Play Hatch won the Reading area record for the number of sons serving. Mr and Mrs Buxcey had thirteen children, nine of whom served in the forces. Corporal/Sergeant Frederick and Private Reginald, serving in the same battalion of the Royal Berks had been killed on the same day at the Battle of Loos. Frederick had been sniped while bringing a wounded soldier out of the line. Private P. had been gassed and was in hospital, Private E. was in training, Private Ernest had been severely wounded in the leg, foot and head during October 1916, and was waiting his discharge. Frank, a widower with three children, had a twisted back, Private J. was in India. Private W. was in the RM at Deal and Private Alfred was a cook with the Devonshire Regiment.

With the battle of Third Ypres under way, again as during the Somme and Arras fighting, local casualties mounted. In smaller communities like Earley their loss was significant, especially if they all belonged to the same church. St Peter's Church magazine noted that 'the war still continues to bring anxiety and sorrow to very many of our families, and our list of those who have fallen while fighting for their country keeps increasing. This month [August] has been an especially sad one: we have lost during its course Lieutenant Brian Dunlop [3rd Grenadier Guards, nineteen-year-old son of Mrs and the late H.W. Dunlop, of Maisonnette, Earley, Reading.], who died at the head of his men just as he had reached his objective; George Maskell, the well-known big drummer of our CLB [Church Lad's Brigade member, Kitchener volunteer and Lance-Corporal in 6th Royal Berks]; Sergeant John Parker (one of our very keenest and best CLB workers) and Lance-Corporal Alfred Dee who were killed by one shell side by side; Joseph Corby [Husband of Lillian Beatrice Corby, of 90 Brighton Rd, Reading], a regular member of our congregation. The following are also mentioned as sick or wounded: William Waite, William Wenmon, G. Balkwell, D. Evans, W. Wilder.'

While Reading butchers complained about shortages and fixed prices, Reading bakers welcomed government interference. The price of bread was reduced. This was seen as beneficial to both baker and

The staff of the Palace Theatre, Mrs Simmons in centre, who worked 'unceasingly and ungrudgingly' in waiting upon the wounded warriors at the tea provided by Mr John Eighteen, at the R.A.C. Sports at Palmer Park.

customer. Bakers had only one issue with the fixed prices: 1d for a gallon of bread would not cover their costs as horse corn had gone up 200 per cent. From the middle of September, customers knew that a two pound loaf would cost 4½d over the counter and a farthing more if wrapped.

However, most goods and services were going up in price. From 28 May a haircut went up to 4d and a shave cost 2d. The hairdressers and barbers explained that it was because of the cost of living. Ribbon was also more expensive and was difficult to find, so much so that people began stealing it from graves, a practice that was frowned upon. The vicar of Earley wrote 'on the occasion of a recent funeral the ribbons from the wreath were taken from the grave…this is not the first time this has happened. We do not wish to deprecate the custom of sending wreaths, but we would request that the broad and expensive ribbons so often used may be taken off and not left as a temptation. As to the

people who take these or flowers, we cannot speak too strongly; robbing the dead is one of the worst forms of sacrilege.'

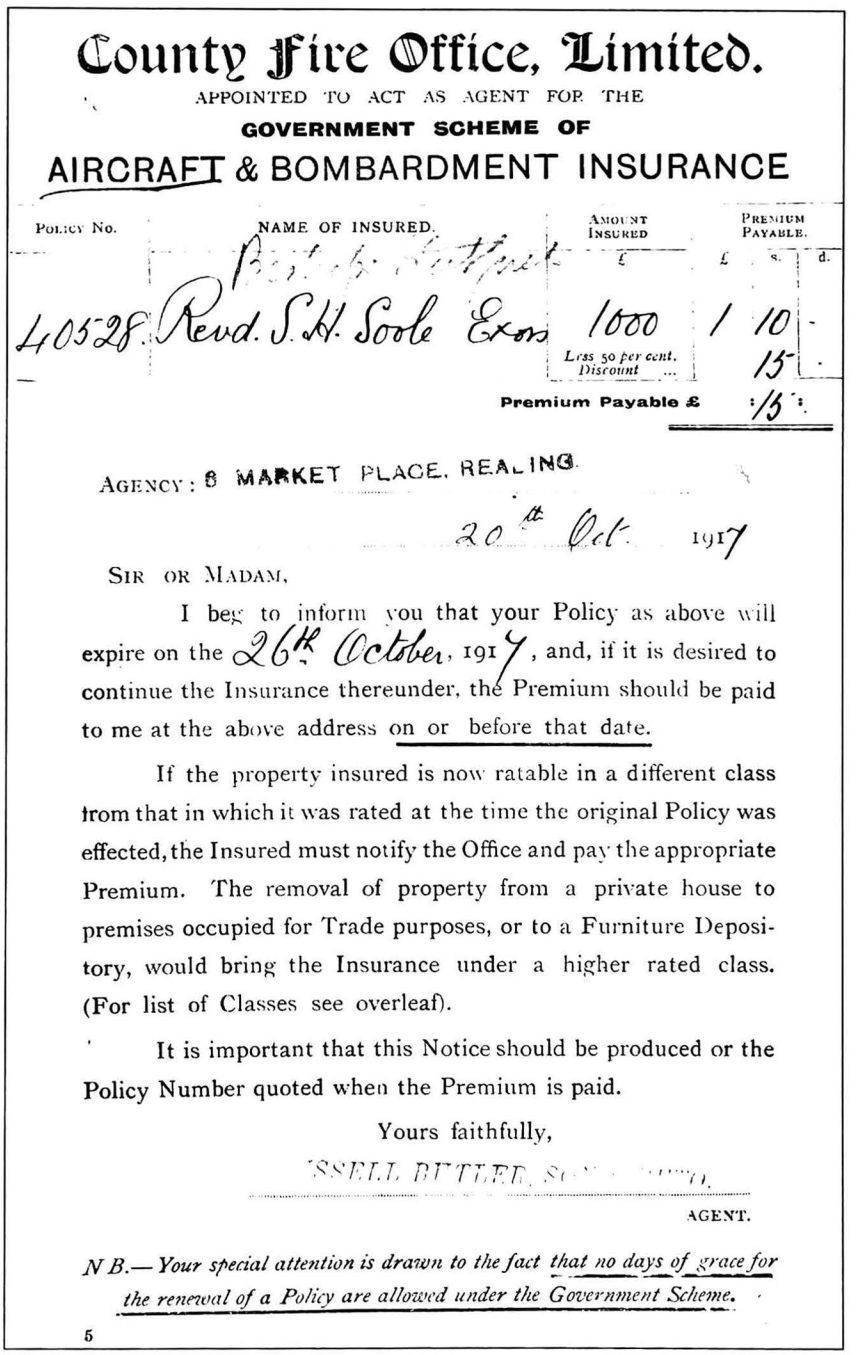
Freehold house prices were also increasing and it is interesting to compare them with today's: 79 Blenheim Street sold at auction for £200 (£185,000 in 2006); 81 Blenheim Road – £405 (£250,000 in 2005); 73 Watlington Street reached £185 (£415,000 in 2013). At the same time some of Reading's housing was being classed as unfit for habitation. Henry Whiteaway, of 173 Gosbrook Road, Caversham was summoned for failing to obey an order to vacate his residence. He was in France at the time. The house had been scheduled for demolition as unfit for habitation but due to the housing problems, his wife had been unable to find another house for herself and six children.

The higher prices were due to demand outstripping supply. Any form of accommodation was sought, even vacant shops. Demand had never been higher and the influx of migrants from London, fleeing to escape the air raids, made it more serious. Reading, like other towns round London had been hard-pressed to cope with the number of visitors it received from the capital. The end of September and beginning of October saw such an influx of people anxious to escape the air raids that it was very difficult to accommodate them. Some slept in the station waiting room, others in the police station. 'The visitors consisted largely of Jews', and at least 90 per cent were Russian

Father and Brothers of
Mrs. S. BRAZELL, Newsagent,
Southampton Street Post Office,
Reading.
Mr. WM. C. GARDNER, who possesses the Long Service Medal, Royal Berks Volunteers.
Spr. WM. GARDNER, R.E., has served two years in Egypt.
Pte. HARRY GARDNER, Royal Berks Regt., 12 months in France.
Sergt. FRANK GARDNER, Yeomanry.
Air Mechanic ALBERT GARDNER, R.N.A.S.
Pte. FREDK. H. GARDNER, Gloucester Regt.—Wounded.
Trooper JOSEPH A. GARDNER, S.G.O.H.—Wounded.
The late Pte. PERCY GARDNER, East Lancs. Regt. Machine Gun Section—Killed in action.

A family at War.

Poles, many accompanied by a large number of children. Some spoke only broken English, making it difficult for the police to register them. Many brought with them their feather beds, blankets and pillows.



County Fire Office, Limited.

APPOINTED TO ACT AS AGENT FOR THE

GOVERNMENT SCHEME OF

AIRCRAFT & BOMBARDMENT INSURANCE

Policy No.	Name of Insured.	Amount Insured £	Premium Payable £ s. d.
40528	Revd. S. H. Soole Exors	1000	1 10 -
		Less 50 per cent. Discount ...	15 -
		Premium Payable £	1 5 -

Agency: 8 MARKET PLACE, READING.

20th Oct. 1917

Sir or Madam,

I beg to inform you that your Policy as above will expire on the 26th October, 1917, and, if it is desired to continue the Insurance thereunder, the Premium should be paid to me at the above address on or before that date.

If the property insured is now ratable in a different class from that in which it was rated at the time the original Policy was effected, the Insured must notify the Office and pay the appropriate Premium. The removal of property from a private house to premises occupied for Trade purposes, or to a Furniture Depository, would bring the Insurance under a higher rated class. (For list of Classes see overleaf).

It is important that this Notice should be produced or the Policy Number quoted when the Premium is paid.

Yours faithfully,

RUSSELL BUTLER, Sc[illegible]

AGENT.

N B.— Your special attention is drawn to the fact that no days of grace for the renewal of a Policy are allowed under the Government Scheme.

5

A renewal notice for aircraft and bombardment insurance to Reverend Soole, a local vicar.

The council realised the scope of the problem. One hundred new houses were needed immediately, but because of the war and shortage of funds plans could only be for the future. It intended to submit proposals to the Local Government Board to build 400-500 new houses as there were practically no habitable houses available for the working classes. They had to demolish 158 houses and close seventeen which further reduced the stock, at a time when the population was growing. In 1901 it was 72,217, 1911 – 87,613, and the council estimated that the 1917 population was 1,300 more.

Increasing numbers of residents stayed, adding to the number of children in the elementary schools. To show the growth the council published the numbers of children attending school:

Week ended	Attendance at Elementary School
7 September	15240
14 September	15293
21 September	15308
28 September	15330
5 October	15446
12 October	15524
19 October	15625
26 October	15731
2 November	15747

In the nine week period it had risen by over 500.

Children were innocent bystanders in the wayward or unpleasant lives of their parents and yet it was they who paid the price. Three childcare stories seem to encapsulate the lives of many of the poor of Reading.

Frank and Alice Simmonds of 6 Wolseley Street were summoned for having neglected their child, Kathleen, in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to her health. They had been prosecuted by the NSPCC previously but nothing had changed. The defendants had four children at home. Kathleen, aged eight, was found to be suffering from a very serious complaint in an advanced stage and was under medical treatment. The charge was that they had not provided proper medical attention. The wife had left her husband some weeks before and gone to live with another man in a common lodging house.

When she heard about the illness, Alice was stopped from entering the family house and abused. The husband said that she had been the curse of his life for five to six years. He hadn't got medical advice because he didn't know what she was suffering from. His wife had been living an immoral life for some time past, and was the cause of their daughter Mercy being sent to a home two years ago. The Bench thought the charge was proved and that the wife was the principal offender. She was sentenced to two months' imprisonment with hard labour. The husband received a £2 fine or twenty-one days because, although he had neglected his duty, it was probably because he had an incomplete knowledge of the law.

Not everyone shared in the increased prosperity brought to the town by the war. Widower Henry Milson, of 33 Thorn Street, who worked for the Reading Gas Works, was earning £2 a week with war bonus. He was accused of neglecting his four children, Kathleen, Edward, Thomas and Nellie, in what the mayor said was a very bad case, especially as he had already served a month in prison in 1911 for cruelty to his children. The School Medical Officer had visited the house and found it nearly empty and exceedingly dirty. There was one earthenware vessel for all washing purposes. Only one bedroom was in use with remains of a mattress, one bedstead and one table. Bed linen was filthy as was the clothing of the children, being nothing but rags. The only food in the house was half a loaf. The children's bodies were dirty; they did not seem to be properly fed, and their neglected condition, together with improper feeding, was prejudicial to their health. He had had housekeepers since 1914 but none would stay. The defendant said he had fed them well, but no one would look after them so he had asked for them to be taken away. He was imprisoned for three months with hard labour.

Children can sometimes get in the way of an adult's life. Edith Loader had an answer to this, Eliza Brooks, of 18 York Road, had a different answer. Eliza was charged with abandoning her three children aged seven, five and three in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering to their health. Her husband was in the ASC and she was living on an allowance of £2 12s 6d plus 20s from her two lodgers. Having sold or pawned all her possessions, she had gone to live with a soldier in Brighton, who, she told the detective, she intended to stay with. She hoped her husband would divorce her. As the Bench could

find no extenuating circumstances, she was given three months with hard labour.

At Wokingham County Bench, Edith Loader was charged with the wilful murder of her daughter, aged six months, by throwing her into the river at Reading on 21 October 1917. When she was lodging on Queen's Road, she took her child out with her at 6.30 pm and returned alone. On 9 November the body of a dead female child was found in the river at Wargrave. The child's clothing identified the infant as Loader's. She had confessed to Police Sergeant Pierce who arrested her. She was remanded while the body was exhumed for investigation.

At the later trial she was found guilty of wilful murder and sentenced to death. She was helped from the dock in a weeping condition at the end of the trial. The jury had made a strong recommendation of mercy and, a week later, her sentence was reduced to penal servitude for life. She was released on licence on 18 April 1923. At the same time, a Berkshire man was convicted of the double murder of his cousin (his common-law wife) and their child near Newbury. He was also sentenced to death. His appeal failed and he was hung on 19 February 1919.

At least Brooks had done something for which she deserved to be sent to prison. Very different was the case of a naturalised Hungarian who had done nothing except be born in the wrong country. In September 1917, the authorities suddenly realised there was a Hungarian living in Datchet. Even though it was Philip Alexius László de Lombas, a painter known particularly for his portraits of royal and aristocratic personages, with a British born-wife and who had become a British citizen in 1914, he was interned until June 1919.

With the fourth winter of the war approaching, people's attention was drawn towards coal, its availability and price. Reading Coal Supplies Committee complained that London was given preference by the Coal Controller, causing shortages in provincial towns like Reading, and declared that 1,000 tons were needed to be allotted for sale to the poorer classes during the coming winter. The committee also complained about the quality of some of the coal being sent; Monmouthshire steam coal was unsuitable for household use, and its lowest cost was 32s 7d a ton. There was also general concern about the overall cost of coal per ton: best was 38s, best household 36s, screened 35s, best kitchen 34s and screened kitchen 35s.

Just before Christmas, the Controller of Coal Mines informed coal merchants that the complicated and paper-driven new scheme would even out distribution. Before selling a ton or more to a customer, they had to get a written statement about how much coal a customer had in their cellar and how long it would last. If this was a month or more, the customer could have no more until he was down to a month's supply. The exception was for people living in the country. If they normally bought a truckload and hauled it themselves, they could continue to have a truckload.

The number of new inhabitants also affected the availability of food. Such an increase in the town's population meant a run on the stocks of the local grocers and butchers. The question being asked was: 'If the newcomers stay, will the Food Controller increase the amount of food for Reading?'

Reading Food Committee drew the attention of the Ministry of Food to another Reading problem: the already difficult situation would get worse unless steps were taken to ensure larger food supplies, noting shortages in tea, butter, sugar, bacon and eggs. This was due to an increase in population during the war and to the influx from London. 'There was not a single shop that was not out of something.' Customers often had to wait two or three days for new stock and there was little choice as regards quality of tea. People had to trudge from shop to shop just to get a ¼pound at 4s a pound. International Stores suggested an easy remedy to this – drink coffee instead.

Shopkeepers were receiving a third or less of their normal supply. Butter, being sold in ¼ pounds, was similarly hard to obtain but fortunately there was no shortage of margarine. 'Eggs at 4d each had become a luxury and bacon prices' limited purchases. Milk had gone up to 7d a quart on 1 October. Meat was readily available but not all butchers displayed their prices prominently. Vegetables were the only foodstuff in plentiful supply.

As the food problem got worse, Reading shops started to close early due to stock exhaustion. Sugar was easier to obtain but it was increasingly difficult to find tea, butter, bacon and even margarine. Many thought it was good news that the government was considering rationing.

This worsening of the food situation affected the Christmas celebrations. After long discussion, it was decided that the Christmas

breakfast in Coley for the poor children would not be held. This was 'not for a want of funds, thanks to the generous public, nor from want of energy on the part of the workers, but simply on grounds of national economy because of the difficulty in obtaining food material.'

With this shortage of food, it was sensible to fine Georgina Humphries of The Lodge Hotel, Kings Road, for giving too much food to the officers billeted on her. There would be rationing in January to stop queues and secure equal distribution. The Reading scheme was based on individual ration cards, with each person choosing their own supplier, allowing the trader to receive the amount needed for their customers.

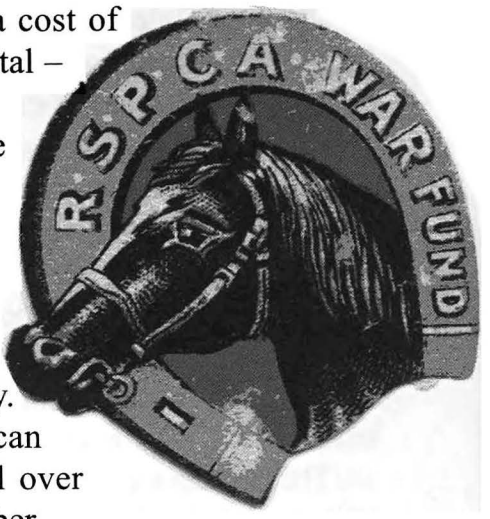
The problem of food supplies was clearly stated in the *Chronicle*. 'What might be described as the fight for food still goes on in the town, and this week (week ending 7 December) there have been the usual queues outside some of the shops, women braving the cold weather in order to obtain tea, butter, margarine, and other commodities...some shops have been open barely half of the time...one day there is a good supply of margarine, the next hardly any can be obtained at all...there is not much lard...those in queues have a grievance against some of the retailers who, when they have butter, serve it by the pound instead of half-pounds and quarter-pounds. Consequently, a number of fortunate people get a good supply and others, after waiting a considerable time, get none at all.' In sympathy with the general feeling, a Trades Union meeting in Market Place raised its voice against profiteering and the poor distribution of food.

With the military having first call on most materials, a shortage of petrol was inevitable, but that problem was easily solved. Vincent's of Castle Street created a gas bag to sit on the roof of a car. The bag held 200 cubic feet of domestic gas and was fastened to a superstructure of wood constructed and fitted by Vincent's. It was cleaner but not as fast as petrol and could be recharged in three minutes with the correct attachments. A special device in the engine controlled the mix and irregularity of pressure when the bag deflated. Emergency petrol was carried and it was very easy to switch from one fuel to the other.

The RBH had asked residents to dig deep and so did the RSPCA. Its Fund for Sick and Wounded Horses needed £30,000 to build a hospital for 200 horses and to repair the four already in existence which held between 1,000 and 1,250 horses. They supplied all the essential

equipment and supplies for the army at a cost of £10,000 to £12,000 a week for each hospital – the army supplied the personnel.

Once again the Royal Berkshire Regiment Tobacco Fund asked for £1,000 to cover the next six months. They had sent out five million cigarettes, 260,000 cigars (no longer obtainable), over five tons of tobacco and 25,000 local papers. 'For the soldier, tobacco is a necessity. Hunger, cold, fatigue and wounds he can endure if he can smoke.' They were still over £300 short of their target when one subscriber chided the fund for its persistency, remarking 'there are other things besides tobacco.' The fund organiser agreed: 'there are gas shells, tear shells, shrapnel, Jack Johnsons and "stink pots", worse than Paddy MacGinty's goat. But the boys have these already. The "other thing" they want, above all, is a whiff of sweet, fragrant tobacco, and 2,340 have written to say so. From Salonika, "God bless all your subscribers. We shall never forget their help and sympathy".'



The RSPCA and the Blue Cross Fund both raised money for horses. This is a flag-day badge for the RSPCA.

How could two Germans escape from Reading Gaol and then disappear, never to be heard of again? Perhaps like Claas in 1916 they joined the army? In the closing months of the year came two separate escape attempts by German PoWs. Four men, two German, one Austrian and one Spaniard, escaped from Reading Gaol on 3 November. They had made a key for the exercise ground and with a rope scaled the eighteen-foot wall. Three had previous convictions, Muller for burglary and wounding, Class for housebreaking and Hemlar with being in possession of a loaded firearm. The Spaniard made good his escape, taking asylum at the Spanish Embassy. Class surrendered at Cannon Road police station but the other two simply vanished.

The second attempt did not end so calmly. Carl Buchgeister, a twenty-five-year-old Prussian Guard, died on 13 November from injuries received the previous day. Interned at Bramley PoW camp, he made an attempt to escape and was shot by a vigilant sentry guard.

Taken to No.1 War Hospital in Reading, he died the next day. He was accorded a full military funeral with an honour guard of PoWs who arrived at the hospital under a strongly armed escort. A large crowd watched curiously as his coffin was carried on a gun carriage through the town; it was an unusual spectacle – enemy soldiers marching through the town. Heading the procession were members of the Defence Corps with rifles reversed. Then came the cortege. On the coffin was a wreath, and placed on a cross, made of moss and ivy, was the deceased's helmet. On each side of the carriage walked the German officers, who acted as bearers, and immediately following behind were Prussian and Bavarian NCOs and men, together with sailors and marines, in total about fifty men. Four huge wreaths, composed of evergreens, were carried by the NCOs. At the rear were more Defence Corps troops followed by their officers. All the guards had loaded rifles and fixed bayonets. At the cemetery the German party sang and a speech was given in German. All threw soil into the grave and the Defence Corps fired a three round volley over the grave before the Last Post was played.

Following other towns and cities, Reading had a tank bank. HMS *Deppo*, the Reading tank, ambled through the streets helping raise money for the War Savings Committee. The aim was to raise £5,000 for the naming of a tank going to France. Around the same time there was yet another flag day, this time to raise money for the minesweepers and sailors. It had a good day and raised £203 6s 2d though further contributions were needed to make it £300.

There was good news for beer drinkers at the end of November. Changes in the Beer Order 1917 allowed brewers to increase the gravity and quality of the government ale. Local brewers H&G Simmonds felt 'this should help to dispel many of the complaints on the part of the beers recently offered them. During the winter months particularly the increase in gravity and the extra "warmth" induced thereby will be much appreciated.'

In the run-up to Christmas, the courts were kept busy. Margaret Hammer was fined 5s for her carelessness in looking after a kitten resulting in cruelty. Two Australians were charged with absenteeism and were placed in custody to wait for an escort. Maria Brooks, of 4 Bedford Court, was convicted of assaulting Edith Lewendon of 2 Bedford Court. As she did not appear and had a previous conviction,

France's Day in Reading with volunteer collectors dressed in the national Alsatian and Lorraine costumes. The gentleman is Professor A.V. Salmon of University College who organised the collection which raised £181 10s 9d.

she was sentenced to imprisonment for one month. Her crime was striking Edith's mother on the head with an enamel plate and then three times on the chest and knocking her over. George Batten, of 48 Weldale Street, was fined 20s for each offence: giving a false name and travelling with a ticket that had had the date altered. Annie Ingram, of Emmer Green, was charged with wandering in Kidmore End Road, being at the time a supposed lunatic. The magistrate made an order for her to be detained in an institution. Her friends wouldn't look after her and she wouldn't stay in her own house because she said someone was making a noise in it. Fred Kaye, of 9 South Street, was placed on probation for two years and ordered to pay the cost of the summons for being drunk and disorderly in West Street. Private George Abery, of 30 Armour Road, was convicted of assaulting Alfred Annetto, of 23 Armour Road. He had kicked him in the ankle and then struck his jaw. Ellen Robinson, of 24 Church Street, was summoned for assaulting Elizabeth Cone and for a similar offence against James Robinson of

40 Silver Street. A cross summons was brought by the defendant against the second complainant. Cone said her husband and Robinson had used bad language and assaulted her while outside a pub in Silver Street. The defendant's husband corroborated this, stating he was forced to use violence against his wife when she attacked him with a hatpin. The defendant denied assaulting the second complainant. She alleged the latter took off his coat and knocked her down. The Bench dismissed the case against her husband but the other charges were proven. Cone had a number of convictions for common and aggravated assaults and was therefore sent to prison for six weeks on the first charge and four weeks on the second, with sentences to run concurrently. After sentencing the defendant thanked the Bench: 'Thank you, Sir. It will do me good; and I hope Mr Robinson will be dead when I come out.'

Christmas 1917 was not to be the same as Christmas 1916 as the shortages now continued to hit everyday life. One obvious shortage was money for the Comforts Fund that needed £300-£400 a month to function. With over 2,500 wounded soldiers to look after in Reading over Christmas, it was running out of funds. It asked residents to think of these men before themselves. Fortunately the free buffet run at the Reading South Eastern Railway station would continue to be open and free as it had raised £216 2s from a recent concert, dance and auction.

A meat shortage was feared after Christmas. Hundreds of thousands of cattle were killed due to the high cost of feed. The situation was so desperate that at Reading market anything with a shred of meat on it was being offered for sale. The concern was that many butchers would sell out before Christmas. Neither the public nor butchers were happy. Apart from the shortage of meat, butchers were losing money as government Meat Orders only allowed 1s 2½ a pound for a carcass of meat while best cattle were fetching 1s 7d a pound alive, a loss of £7 a bullock. As a result, a butcher was losing 3d on every pound he bought. Mutton lost 1d a pound.

Christmas closing was from 25 to 28 December. But before then there was still a chance to buy the latest records from Barnes and Avis, 5-7 Duke Street, for 2s upwards. Records such as 'Where the black-eyed Susans grow', 'Down where the Swanee river flows', 'Roses of Picardy' from 'Bubbly', 'Cheep', 'Round the map' and all the London revues were on sale.

There was also time to purchase a mask from McIlroy's for the Grand Fancy Dress Masquerade Ball at the large Town Hall on 1 January. A double ticket, including supper, cost 8s, a single with supper 4s 6d, a single ticket cost 2s 6d, and the balcony cost 1s 3d including tax. Dancing was from 7.30 pm till 2 am.

At the Post Office came the usual stress and strain. A falling-off compared with 1916 had been anticipated, but there was a marked increase, particularly in parcels and registered letters, with the work in the two departments trebling. An extra 177 staff were needed to sort and deliver.

As in the other three war Christmases, 'everything that was possible was done' at the Reading and VAD War Hospitals 'to make it bright and cheerful' for the wounded. Thanks to the efforts of the staff and kind friends of the hospitals, the general consensus was that it was 'a most enjoyable time'. After a Christmas meal of turkey and Christmas pudding, there were Christmas cards, with some of the men playing football in Cintra Park. In the afternoon tea with sardines, fruit and cake was made more cheerful with crackers and a lucky sack ('grab bag' as the Canadian wounded called it) to dip into, followed by a Whist Drive. 'Though away from home and leave was stopped for the day, it would have been difficult to find a happier or gayer crowd of men. In the words of one of the patients, it was "a day of all days".'

The READING WAR HOSPITALS
CARE & COMFORTS COMMITTEE

Hon. Treasurer: S. H. HODGKIN. President: Mrs. BENYON. Hon. Secretary: Miss KENSINGTON.
Depot: 62, MINSTER STREET.

Care and Comforts Day,

Saturday, June 30, 1917.

Street and House-to-House Collection

TO PROVIDE

HOME COMFORTS

FOR THE

2,000 WOUNDED SOLDIERS NOW IN READING.

(1) **HOSPITALITY** for wives and mothers who come to see their wounded husbands and sons.
(2) **FRUIT, FLOWERS** and **VEGETABLES** sent daily to all the Hospitals. Also Cake, Biscuits, Buns and Potted Meats weekly.
(3) **NEWSPAPERS**—over 400 daily.
(4) **BOOKS, MAGAZINES** and **STATIONERY.**
(5) **TOBACCO**—over 4 Tons. Nearly 3 Million Cigarettes.
(6) **HANDICRAFTS**—something to occupy hands and minds usefully and happily through long dull hours.
(7) **ENTERTAINMENTS** and **GAMES**—Concerts, Drives, River Excursions, Picnics, Teas.
(8) **CHRISTMAS FARE**—Festivities and Presents for every soldier, in every Hospital.
(9) **GARMENTS** of every kind. Over 30,000 already supplied.
(10) **ODDS** and **ENDS**—Garden Seats, Easy Chairs, Billiard and Card Tables, Gramophones, etc., etc.

An information advert describing what the committee would do with the money collected.

The Reverend Canon Fowler of Earley St Peter's summed up the year for his parishioners: 'How the war drags on from week to week, month to month, and how, in spite of all, it finds us determined as ever not to give in until an end has been made of the menace of tyranny and despotism.'

With no message for the future from the papers, as in 1916, there were always the sales to look forward to. Heelas and Lea & Co.'s started on 31 December, Bull's, Hedgcocks' & Dykes on 3 January, with Garret's and McIlroy's on 10 January.

Telephone:
Reading 995.

Telegrams:
"Heelas, Reading."

BY APPOINTMENT.

PARIS MODEL GOWNS AND MILLINERY

For Spring and Summer, 1917.

In selecting your new Gown, Costume or Coat-Frock and Millinery, it is as well to be guided by the world's best designers. For this purpose we have especially secured many Models from the leading Paris Houses, and a charming display will be arranged during the

EXHIBITION WEEK

COMMENCING MONDAY NEXT.

All these designs have been chosen very carefully indeed, and in view of the trend of thought to-day, we have selected only those most suited to the times, and which are essentially practical and free from exaggeration.

You are cordially invited to come and see the Models in the Showrooms, also to view the special showing of New Spring Goods in all Departments. The White Goods Display will be unusually interesting.

HEELAS OF READING LTD.

Even with a war on, the design houses of Paris were still the best in the world. An advert by Heelas inviting interested customers to see the latest fashions.

POSTHUMOUS D.C.M. RECEIVED BY WIDOW.

The late Sergt. W. Butler, The Buffs, Prospect Street, Reading, who was killed in action on September 3rd, 1916, was posthumously awarded the D.C.M., and at the Reading Barracks on June 25th his widow received the medal from Major-General Western at a special parade.

THE LATE SERGT. W. BUTLER.

MRS. BUTLER.

One of many not in the local regiment. During 1917 his wife received his bravery award from Major-General Western.

CHAPTER 2

1918
The Final Blows

In 1918, the *Chronicle* introduced the New Year with serious words. 'Whether 1918 will end the war may be uncertain. That it will decide the issue is clear. It will be a year of trial, endurance and sacrifice, in which every citizen is called upon to lend a hand.' Would life in Reading be any different after such a statement?

Once more sharing his feelings in the Parish Magazine, the Reverend Canon Fowler expressed his disappointment and hope for the coming year: 'The hope which we all felt at the beginning of last year, that at its conclusion the world might have attained a secure and lasting peace has not been fulfilled; but God will surely grant it to us in his own good time.'

As every year, Reading libraries proudly displayed the bare statistics of their organisation. In the year, 172,033 volumes had been borrowed, a daily average of 671 by 7,836 borrowers. School libraries had borrowed a further 46,351 books. The increase in borrowers was due to the London air raids and new books had been provided by Carnegie Trust money.

How were the tramways doing during 1918? Once again they were able to boast of record numbers and takings. Receipts for the week ending 20 December 1917 were £1,051 16s 3d against £855 9s 1d in 1916, receipts for the week ending 27 December were £1,037 14s 5d compared to 1916's £877 0s 5d. The number of passengers had risen to 243,514 from 240,261 in 1916. A month later the receipts were

CARRYING ON !
We are inclined to take pride in our record for the four years of War.
2,500 of our trained men have left us to join the Forces.
We have had to fill their places with women who were, of necessity, inexperienced in the trade.
We have had to undertake a huge increase of work to carry out the various rationing schemes.
We have met our difficulties as they arose with the minimum of disadvantage to our customers.
If new ones arise, we shall still hope to overcome them and to
CARRY ON.
International Stores
THE BIGGEST GROCERS IN THE WORLD
TEA :: COFFEE :: GROCERIES :: PROVISIONS
I.S. 122

The message for 1918 was 'Stick it' and 'Carry on'. International Stores proudly show how they have carried on.

higher still. For the week ending 31 January 1918 they took £1065 1s 4d, an increase of £304 4s 11 over the previous year. The next week receipts were £1109 4s 1d an increase of £342 6s 10d. And again in February the receipts of the week ending 21st at £1,120 4s 4d were up by £292 11s 5d. The following week, the total came to £1,145 12s 7d, up by £304 6s 3d. The receipts kept increasing. For the five months

from 1 April to 5 September, receipts rose by £7,703 over the corresponding period in 1917.

Later in the year, price rises were questioned as the trams were making such a profit. The blame for any rise in fares was placed on war bonus increases and it was pointed out that, even with increased fares and higher parcel charges, Reading fares were still cheaper than those in most other towns. Higher fares would allow male drivers and conductors to be paid a war allowance of £1 per week of sixty hours and a proportional increase in over-time rates. Female drivers and conductors doing a forty-eight hour week received a war allowance of 16s and the same overtime, hourly and Sunday rates as the men. Other male employees received a £1 war bonus with females getting 9s 6d.

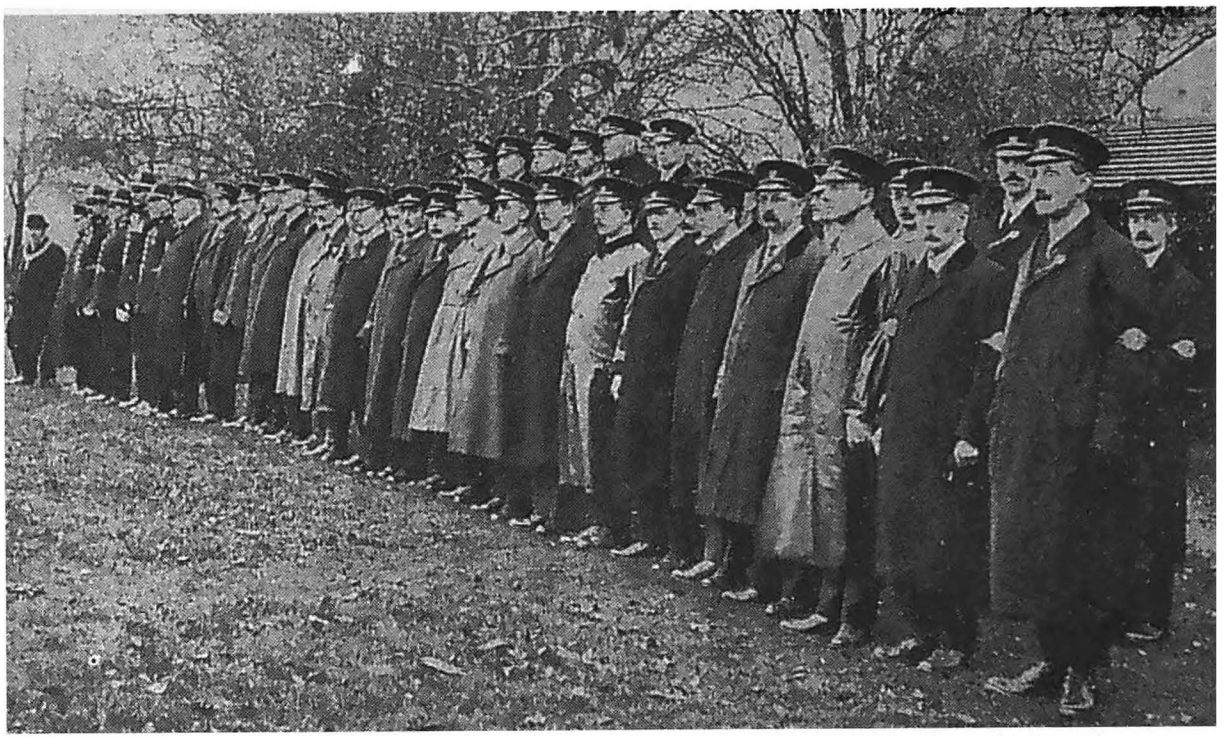
In May, a report summed up the year while leaving out their receipts. The number of persons carried during the year to 1 April was 13,771,598 against 10,919,533 in the previous year. Passengers carried per head of the population increased from 124 to 156. Total mileage was up 7,918 to 920,174, workmen's tickets were up 92,463 to 698,702, scholars' tickets rose by 77,352 to 359,808. And the number of employees called up rose as well. There were now 180 serving, and there had been four fatalities in the year. Only in parcel transport had there been any decrease.

Details of the help provided to Berkshire Regiment PoWs was published in their annual report. It spoke well of the good work done. They were now responsible totally for the food and clothing of 260 men compared to 176 in 1916. During the year, nineteen died in captivity, three were transferred to Switzerland, one was repatriated directly from Germany, one from Switzerland and one escaped from Germany. They provided bread to 323 men as against 216 in the previous year, and sent food parcels to 260 men every four weeks. At the start of 1917 they were sending each man six pounds of bread a week from Berne, in the spring it went down to four pounds, being replaced by biscuits in the summer. With the autumn harvest, it returned to six pounds. Supplying bread for 323 men cost over £125 a month. Clothing was another necessity provided by the fund. Each parcel contained two vests, two shirts, two pairs of pants, three pairs of socks, a jersey, a pair of gloves, three hankies, two towels, three balls of mending wool, three darning needles, boots, shoes, suit, cap, greatcoat

Twenty-year-old Sergeant Lionel Leaver Martin, 2nd/4th Royal Berks, taken while home on leave during 1917. He was killed in action on 11 May 1918 by gas shell shrapnel in the back, and is buried in St Venant-Robeqc Road British Cemetery, Robecq. He was the son of Cecil E. and Annie Martin, of 40, Battle Street, Reading.

and kitbag. Except for the greatcoat and kitbag, which were expected to last a year, other articles were reviewed on a six-monthly basis.

As in the previous years, indictable crime had fallen. The number of known offences was 148, down forty-three from 1917. The total value of property stolen, fraudulently obtained or embezzled, was £509 16s with £237 3s 11d being recovered. The total number of people



On Sunday, 3 November, a number of Reading Special Constables paraded on the lawn of St John's vicarage before marching to their monthly service at St Stephen's Church.

arrested and summoned was 831, a decrease of 289 and the number of juvenile offenders fell from seventy-three to fifty. It was reported that forty-nine officers had joined the colours, three had been killed, ten wounded and one was a PoW. PC A. Powell of the Berks RHA and PC O. Birt of the RGA had received the MM. The force had 279 Special Constables, 132 short of the original strength.

The Chief Constable's report for 1917 showed a mere thirty-seven convictions for drunkenness, only twenty-seven of which came from the borough. Reading was at the top of the tree for best behaviour in county boroughs, their percentage of convictions for drunkenness being 3 per 10,000 inhabitants. Seven public houses were redundant and closed: The Reindeer, The Green Dragon and The Mount in Southampton Street, The Rose & Crown in Silver Street and the Marquis of Lorne in Friar Street and the Traveller's Friend on the Bath Road. Three licensees were convicted. At their AGM, the Reading Licensed Victuallers complained of yet another hard year.

Alcohol always seemed to feature in the local news. At the same time as the above report, there were two other alcohol stories. Firstly in the magistrates court and secondly in open discussion. Two Second

Lieutenants were charged with being drunk in Friar Street. Both had been found on the ground helplessly drunk. The magistrate told them they were a disgrace and gave them the maximum fine of 10s for a first offence. They asked to pay by cheque; when told this was not permissible, they asked to be allowed to go to the bank to get the money. This was refused and the men were ordered to be detained in custody until the money was forthcoming.

The alcohol discussion was not, as was usual, based on its price, quality or availability, but about sensible use and prohibition. With increasing food shortages there were opposing camps about continuing to use food materials for brewing. On one hand there were teetotallers; in contrast were those who extolled beer's virtues as a food, and, in between, citizens who thought food sources could be better used during wartime than for making alcoholic drinks.

These days we would call Dr Campbell a lobbyist but to his audience during the war, he was a scientific expert. During 1917 Dr Campbell, an eminent food expert, informed readers just how important beer was. In 1918 he reinforced his message. Details of his employer were not explained to readers. 'Beer is scarcely inferior to milk in energy production. One pint of beer containing 5 per cent alcohol yields 480 food tons, as compared with 540 yielded by a similar quantity of milk. By calometric value, a glass of good ale is approximately as nourishing as a glass of milk, and that a quart of good beer is nearly equivalent to a quarter pound of bread. Quantity for quantity more nutrition is got out of barley beer than barley bread because it is in a pre-digested form. If you drink beer with your solid food you get more value out of the solid food. Without the brewers' grains there would be far less milk.'

Why would a wholesale provision merchant be so against the use of grain for beer? A local firm, Venner and Sons, opposed this idea and suggested that a better use would be to feed the pigs with the grain so everyone could benefit. This was quickly repudiated by the brewers who claimed that the suggestion was purely for their own benefit, that was the selling of pigs, and not for the common good in war-time. Quoting Professor Waller of UCL 'the food value of beer (plus milk and meat per cattle food) is more than half that of the brewing materials used, whereas the food value of the pig meat is less than 1/5 of the same materials.'

Across the town meetings were held with visitors from America and Canada, who expounded the need for prohibition and how it saved foodstuffs. Audiences learned that Canadian ports had prohibited alcohol; seven provinces were dry; twenty-seven American states had passed a prohibition law, and the US army had no 'wet' canteens (selling alcohol) as happened in British ones.

On the same page as the report appeared was a letter on the subject from a resident. 'Prohibition is exactly one of those things that no government should pass in war-time unless it were shown beyond a shadow of a doubt that it was essential to success in the struggle.' It was needed to keep the workforce going. A further curtailment never mind prohibition 'would cause a recrudescence of that "industrial unrest" which occasioned so much alarm in this country in the summer of last year.' Perhaps the writer's next statement was pertinent and important to himself. 'Lastly, a very great number of people in Reading are exasperated owing to the impossibility of obtaining even the smallest dram of spirits, such as they are accustomed to, and the present arctic conditions generally do not soften their feelings. It is incomprehensible to them why the government should not release a further quantity of spirits from bond, where immense quantities of matured spirits are lying ready for consumption, and their being placed on the market would assuredly relieve the demand for other beverages not now obtainable.'

Clearly this was a way of asking for a winter warmer! It was written when the Thames Valley was suffering from severe winter weather. Following a sharp frost on 16 January, the snow fell from 4 to 9 am the next day and then started again later in the day. By 6 am it was six inches deep and causing traffic dislocation. The trams were two hours late in starting and cars could not move. Outside the town some roads were almost impassable and several villages were practically isolated.

The poor weather once again affected schools. George Palmer School sent those children who made it in to school home because they were too wet to remain. On 17 January, with only thirty-six children in attendance out of a possible 263 the school was closed.

Although increasingly unlikely to be needed, a new air raid warning programme was implemented. The daytime warning would be the same as the existing night one. On receipt of such warnings in Reading, 'each authorised siren will sound six times at short intervals and one

long blast to warn the public and three times with one long blast when danger is over.'

If the worst did happen, Vice Admiral Fleet of Whitley Avenue informed the public that the 13th Berkshire VAD (men) were prepared to succour the wounded. Fully equipped with 'all the necessary dressings and appliances, including sets of splints, Carron oil for burns, tourniquets and special face masks to be worn in the presence of poisonous gases, whether from bombs or burst gas pipes'. This reassuring news continued; readers learned that the seriously injured would be transported by wagons fitted with pillows and blankets to the nearest hospital, all of which were prepared to receive them.

There was one change – the rate of venereal disease: the front page of the *Chronicle* carried an advert from Berkshire County Council about the matter. 'Arrangements have been made by the BCC for the free treatment under conditions of strict secrecy of persons resident in the county of Berkshire suffering from Venereal Disease.' Treatment centres were provided at the RBH, days and hours of attendance for men, Wednesday 2 to 4 and Saturday 7 pm; for women Wednesday 5 pm and Saturday 3 pm. The service was also available at the Radcliffe in Oxford.

The New Year was not without fun. 'Bedad, it's worth a year of anybody's life to see the likes of this' was the overheard remark of a true son of Erin at the large Town Hall at the masquerade ball. 'For never has there been in the annals of Reading, such a grand ball and fancy dress masquerade...what a weird and wonderful display of costumes there was, to be sure!' All the Allied countries were represented; some wore topical costumes such as war bonds while others dressed in humorous costumes, pack of cards, black ragtime singer, Topsy, as well as historical costumes and 'of course Mephistopheles...and peace'. The spectators on the balcony watched them dance all evening.

The wounded were also provided with free fun. Some 700 wounded soldiers were treated to a performance of the 'Bing Boys'. Subscriptions paid for the performance with the cost of the theatre and lighting being provided by the owner Milton Bode.

There were other many and varied demands on the pockets of Reading's citizens. The Watch Committee carefully regulated Flag Days, both military and civilian, providing the public with a list of what

Elsie Taylor, a local woman born in 1895, joined the RAF. She was based locally and could not be sent away from Reading under the terms of her enlistment.

and when. The list for 1918 was long: Salvation Army, all week from 2 March; RFC PoW Fund on 9 March; YMCA for Women Workers on 22 March; French War Emergency Fund on 6 April; Armenian Refugees on 13 April; National Rumanian Relief Fund on 27 April;

The Church Army on 4 May (providing recreation huts and tents and other comforts for soldiers and sailors); Church of England Incorporated Society for providing homes for waifs and strays on 10 August, and so on. Fifteen were scheduled for 1918 and that was just the February list. Others were added during the year, such as the RSPCA day that raised £30.

Life for Reading residents was full of restrictions and obligations. Food was rationed, and residents were now expected to buy a quota of War Bonds. Reading should have been buying £43,300 a week but, in the week ending 2 February, only £23,135 was subscribed, and in the following week only £5,500.

Huntley & Palmers' appeal to the grocery and allied trades was more successful. The YMCA had appealed nationally for £500,000 and Huntley & Palmers were able to provide a cheque for £41,105.

However, later in the month, during Businessman's week, more money was deposited. Huntley & Palmers invested £50,000, an insurance company bought £2,000 and many firms advanced money to their employees to buy bonds, raising £8,000 in three days. In just that one week, £125,000 was raised. So successful was the week that it was extended by another week; the final total was £384,706. This achievement was acknowledged by the King who thanked the people of Reading for their patriotic response to the country's need.

The visit of the King and Queen to Reading on 12 March 'passed off with the greatest éclat'. They were met by large crowds at the station and the bells of St Laurence rang for their arrival, while other church bells rang during the day. The royal party left the station with the Lord Lieutenant as the band played the National Anthem. After inspecting the guard of honour the party proceeded to War Hospital No.1 where the King spoke to wounded patients and the Queen expressed her admiration of the fine design and skill displayed in some flags worked in coloured silk by one of the men. The King presented medals to a number of the soldiers, including the MM to the son of Second Lieutenant A.W. Beasley who had been killed in action on 14 August 1916. The King shook Peter's hand and he saluted smartly. In reply the King clicked his heels. The royal party moved on to the Royal Seed Establishment in Market Place where they were greeted by schoolchildren singing the National Anthem. There they viewed the museum and various departments. At the Town Hall they met

The King presenting Colour Sergeant Major C. Inman of the Royal Berks with the DCM.

Arthur Sutton showing the King some of the seed collection.

The King talking to staff at Huntley & Palmers, each of whom has at least fifty years' continuous service. Some had a record of sixty-two years' service.

representatives of Reading as well as war workers before returning to the Royal Train for luncheon, followed by a visit to the biscuit factory. After the visit, Suttons gave their workers an extra week's wages in appreciation of all their work, expressing the hope that at least half would be invested in war bonds.

The king's equerry was commanded to inform the mayor of 'the great pleasure and gratification afforded' by their visit and that the King and Queen had been 'deeply touched by the loyalty of the enthusiastic welcome accorded to them.'

People still needed their clothes, cleaned, starched and pressed. The Snowflake Laundry of Caversham.

Another struggle for Reading was the provision of enough land for allotments. Although there were 3,500 allotments under cultivation, the waiting list was long. More land was taken over. At the back of Earley Church, five-and-a-half acres were taken but this was not enough for the local residents. It was a similar story in Reading town: four-and-a-half acres at Liebenrood Road, and three acres on the corner of Berkeley Avenue and Bath Road were taken, with proposals for ten to twelve acres of the golf course at the west end of town, three acres in the vicinity of Northcourt Avenue and two acres in Caversham.

For most people, pre-war leisure activities were enjoyed as before throughout 1918. Whippet racing was a regular pastime for many, with races throughout the year and special races for public holidays. Theatre-going was a popular activity with the shows changing regularly and featuring well-known actors and actresses, and musical concerts with well-known singers and musicians.

One production, in keeping with the times as well as being highly acclaimed was *A Better 'ole*, performed at the Royal County Theatre, a play about Captain Bruce Bairnsfather's soldier creations, Old Bill, Alf and Bert. While essentially a comedy, it portrayed the seriousness of the existence of British soldiers in France.

The annual children's concert continued and there was a Grand Concert in the Town Hall for RFC PoWs. Those with nimble fingers enjoyed the Samaritan Sewing Guild and, for animal fanciers, there were rabbit shows and Cage Bird Society meetings.

Wages were again an issue for council employees. The National Union of General Workers felt the council's offer of 2s a week extra was insufficient, and they wanted to discuss an increase of 5s a week and the provision of waterproof coats and leggings for certain highway workers. No decision was made and the matter was adjourned.

Absentees were regularly caught by the Reading police. So far, like William Lincoln, an Australian, and William Haley, both found living at 45 Katesgrove, they were males. But in February, two women appeared before the Bench, Emily Haigh and Ada Lewis, both members of the WAAC, quartered at 161 Kings Road. They were both charged with 'absenting themselves from their work which it was their duty to perform' without lawful excuse. They were remanded for a week while enquiries were made and then fined.

Only two Reading men, Patrick Breen and Luke Butcher, were

charged with assisting the enemy, although judicially they were charged with attempting to interfere with the discipline or administration of the PoW Camp at Bramley. Their crime was to bring 'food and tobacco into the camp for the consumption of German prisoners'. After they received a month's imprisonment the Bench decided to refer the case to a higher court. For an unknown reason, although they were both locals, the story was never followed up.

There was less crime and most of what there was, was very low level. Typical offences included: firing an air gun at objects on top of a fence (William Halestrap of 26 Whitley Street, fined 15s); gaming with cards in Northumberland Avenue (William Downham, of Mount Pleasant, 15s fine, William (15s fine) and Herbert (20s if repeated) Kirby, of 41 Waldeck Street, and William Brown, of 57 Waterloo Street (15s fine)), while two unnamed boys were fined 5s for firing a catapult in Northumberland Avenue. The most serious crime reported in the early part of the year was an indecent assault on a schoolboy. Philip Belsham, formerly of Reading but now serving in the RFC, pleaded guilty and asked for leniency as he wanted to make good. The Bench sentenced him to four months' imprisonment with hard labour.

Reading Gaol accepted more Sinn Feiners during the year. Many were hard-liners who had been involved in mutiny at Lewes prison. Among those detained were William Cosgrave who would hold senior positions in the new Ireland, and Laurence Ginnell, MP for Westmeath, a known troublemaker. The expected mutiny never materialised, but everyone was glad to see them go because they were extremely provocative and noisy from 7 am to 10 pm every day.

The meat shortage prophecy came true. 'After the butter, margarine, tea, bacon and sugar shortages came the meat shortage.' A new meat order had come into operation on 26 December: all cattle were sold on live weight, meaning farmers would get 4½d a pound less. The result was fewer cattle at market and no local cattle at all, except for just two old cows and nineteen Irish oxen of indifferent quality that sold at top prices to local butchers. With so little beef, more mutton was purchased, increasing prices by 1½d a pound at market.

Following London, the Home Counties and other larger towns, Reading decided to ration meat by value. In its first week the ration was 10d and 4d for children under six. Ration cards were distributed

in early February with the scheme for butter, lard, margarine, meat and tea starting on 21 February.

Strong words were used to bring home to people the price of their food. 'The other day three British destroyers were lost while conveying butter ships from Holland [actually sunk in a minefield on their way to a convoy from Holland]. Let this fact be a constant reminder to people that while they are grumbling because they cannot get butter and margarine or because they have to wait in queues to obtain it, the men of the Royal Navy are dying without a grumble in order to bring it to us. Imported foodstuffs are very often bought with the blood of our own men-folk. The less food every class of the public try to get, whether in queues or hotels, and restaurants, the less do we risk the lives of others. This should be an unshirkable inducement to food economy.'

Whether this had any effect is unknown, but one change that would affect eating habits came in to force on 11 February. The latest shortage of butter and margarine – none had been available for three days – was due to the government's taking three days production from the Maypole factories. Which in turn closed the Maypole shops for three days. When butter and margarine became available again, no more than four ounces per person per week could be expected. It was as gloomy for other foods. Just as the food shortage 'reached a very acute stage', Reading's own rationing scheme became operative. Although the tea supply had improved, bacon was still scarce. Even rabbits were not plentiful. There was a shortage of beasts and sheep at market and butchers' shops were selling out very quickly. The new Meat Order now only allowed the sale of meat on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. With supply running at about a quarter of demand, the proposal that butchers would get, if available, 50 per cent of what they had sold in October, was an improvement. Now even sausages were included in the Meat Order. The only exception was cooked meat which could be sold whenever available.

With the introduction of the meat rationing scheme each adult received eight ounces a week with four ounces for children under nine. This change meant that there was no difficulty in obtaining meat. However, many of the committee felt that those who did heavy manual work should receive more. There was no consensus on this, so it was decided to give ten ounces to everyone over six. Again, London was

To be filled up by Food Office before issue.

Holder's Surname: Wood

Christian Name: Albert S

Address: 301 Oxford Rd. READING

KEEP THIS CARD CAREFULLY

RATIONING ORDER, 1918. N. 86.

Food Office of Issue.

READING.

To register for MEAT, BUTTER and SUGAR, fill up the counterfoils A, B and C on lower half of card, and give them to any Retailers you choose. The Retailers must write or stamp their names and addresses on these spaces. You will not be able to change your Retailer again without consent of the Food Office.

A — Name and Address of BUTCHER

B — Name and Address of BUTTER Retailer: BAYLIS & CO Broad St. Corner READING.

C — Name and Address of SUGAR Retailer

D — Name and Address of Retailer for.....

E — Name and Address of Retailer for.....

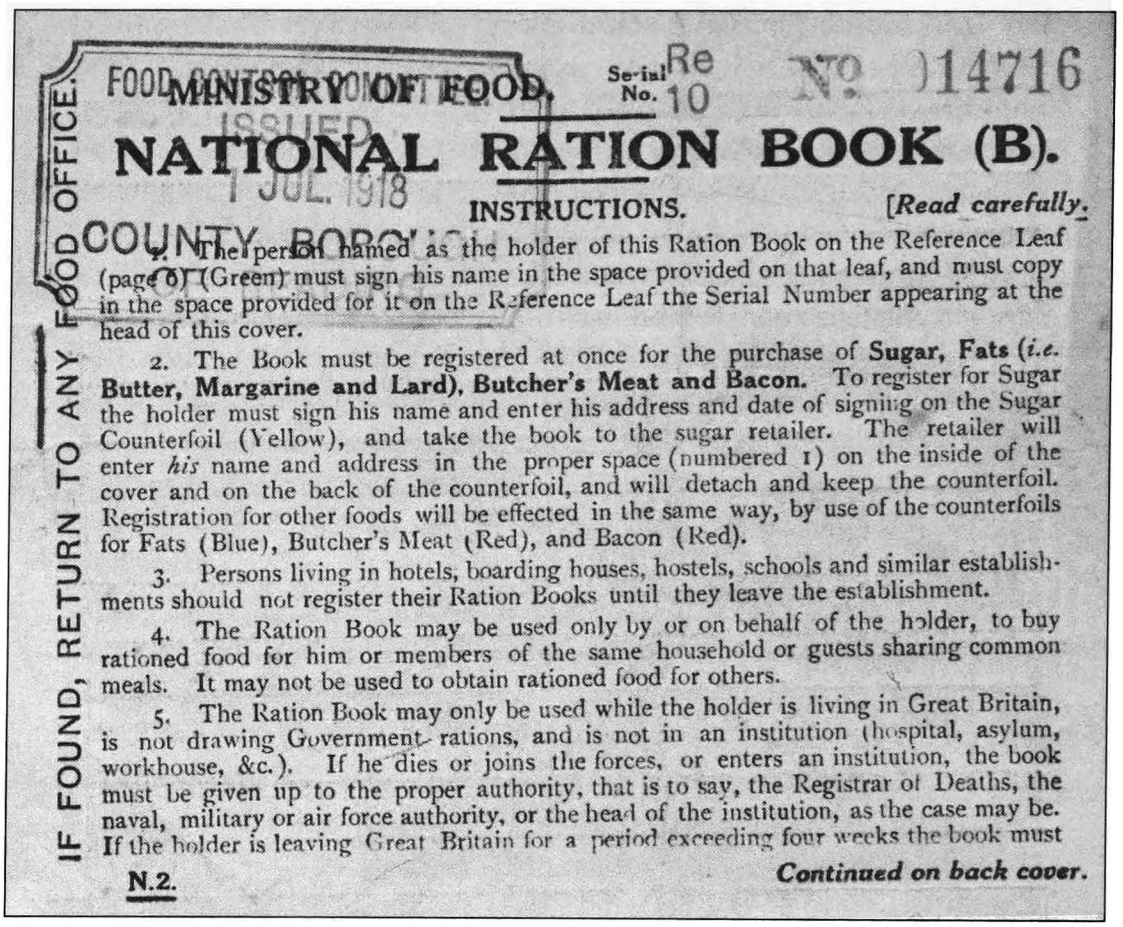
F — Name and Address of Retailer for.....

A ration card to show who Albert had decided to buy his meat, butter and sugar from. No other retailer could sell him these goods.

treated more favourably; there, the ration was sixteen ounces a person. This included bacon, poultry, rabbits and other meats. None of these were included in the Reading Scheme. Another positive of the scheme was that there would be four ounces of margarine a week for everyone.

The distribution of ration cards, which was helped by teachers released for the purpose, was delayed by another shortage. There was not enough paper. Even so, long queues formed to collect cards that did not exist because of this or because retailers had not sent the forms in. At one point the queue stretched from the Town Hall to the Victoria gates at Forbury. This was a week before it was due to start and clearly shows that food was at the forefront of people's concerns. Given the vagaries of supply, the rations would be fixed each week and would vary depending on what was available.

However, the scheme was seen as very successful by the authorities, who sent a French Ministry of Food mission to both London and


IF FOUND, RETURN TO ANY FOOD OFFICE.

FOOD CONTROL COMMITTEE. ISSUED 1 JUL. 1918 COUNTY BOROUGH

MINISTRY OF FOOD. Serial No. Re 10 No. 014716

NATIONAL RATION BOOK (B).

INSTRUCTIONS. [*Read carefully.*

1. The person named as the holder of this Ration Book on the Reference Leaf (page 6) (Green) must sign his name in the space provided on that leaf, and must copy in the space provided for it on the Reference Leaf the Serial Number appearing at the head of this cover.

2. The Book must be registered at once for the purchase of **Sugar, Fats** (*i.e.* **Butter, Margarine and Lard**), **Butcher's Meat and Bacon.** To register for Sugar the holder must sign his name and enter his address and date of signing on the Sugar Counterfoil (Yellow), and take the book to the sugar retailer. The retailer will enter *his* name and address in the proper space (numbered 1) on the inside of the cover and on the back of the counterfoil, and will detach and keep the counterfoil. Registration for other foods will be effected in the same way, by use of the counterfoils for Fats (Blue), Butcher's Meat (Red), and Bacon (Red).

3. Persons living in hotels, boarding houses, hostels, schools and similar establishments should not register their Ration Books until they leave the establishment.

4. The Ration Book may be used only by or on behalf of the holder, to buy rationed food for him or members of the same household or guests sharing common meals. It may not be used to obtain rationed food for others.

5. The Ration Book may only be used while the holder is living in Great Britain, is not drawing Government rations, and is not in an institution (hospital, asylum, workhouse, &c.). If he dies or joins the forces, or enters an institution, the book must be given up to the proper authority, that is to say, the Registrar of Deaths, the naval, military or air force authority, or the head of the institution, as the case may be. If the holder is leaving Great Britain for a period exceeding four weeks the book must

N.2. *Continued on back cover.*

Cover of a ration book issued to a Caversham Resident.

Reading to study the practical working of the food card system. Reading had been selected because it was a pioneer of the voluntary rationing system and for its reputation as 'being one of the most progressive municipalities in the Kingdom'.

Rationing was to put an end to school meals, 3,000 of which were served in the last week of January. Regardless of the need, the strict control of food meant it could no longer be obtained except for the most necessitous children.

To combat the shortages, central government informed the Berkshire War Agricultural Executive Committee that it needed to convert 33,000 acres of pasture into arable land. In an attempt to help, Reading Town Council proposed to convert twenty-five acres of Prospect Park. This was to no avail. The council were informed that

nine-and-a half acres were used for the agistment (a contract for taking in and feeding horses or other cattle on pasture land, for the consideration of a weekly payment of money) of cattle and the remainder, the public games area, for sheep grazing. Land along Pegs Green Lane was suggested instead. Part of this new arable land would have to be devoted to potatoes. The county produced 11,000 tons of these, but consumed 26,100 tons, a shortfall of 4,000 acres' production.

How difficult the food situation was is shown by a court case involving seven young boys. They were summoned for damaging growing clover in a Shinfield field. As they had a playing field available, the magistrate felt there was no excuse, and he fined them 2s 6d, plus costs and 1s for the damage. This was because clover was an important crop for cattle. Four boys did not appear and were fined 5s and 1s damages.

In 1917 a Food Hoarding Order had been added to DORA, making it an offence to keep more food than needed, unless grown by the owner. In February an amnesty was declared in order to encourage people to give up excess stocks for which they would be reimbursed. Given a deadline in mid-February, many Reading citizens sent their surplus to the local hospitals asking nothing in return.

The Queen speaking to Captain F. Elderton of the RFC at No.1 War Hospital.

On one occasion in 1917, Eighteen's, the fishmongers, had been obliged to sell the public fish they did not like but in the absence of anything better needed. The shop's next act for the government was far more popular. Eighteen's was given a ton of sprats to dispose of free. The announcement was greeted with doubt and incredulity but, when asked to bring plates, the public certainly did – most bringing anything capable of holding the fish. A good-humoured and very grateful queue of between 400 and 500 quickly formed, and, within half an hour, each person left with about three pounds of very small sprats.

Earlier in the war, foxhunting had been seen as important to the nation and something that would be kept going regardless. In late February, the Masters of Foxhounds Association unanimously decided that foxhunting would cease from 2 March, the day on which licences for rationing hunters expired. The decision was prompted by a shortage of cereals and to assist in economising on the stock of provender in the country. This decision was to stop only for the season.

The subject of meat attracted the most complaints. During the summer, when there were many cattle in the fields, people received frozen meat. They were not happy with the explanation that it was for the autumn. Butchers had their opening hours controlled by Reading Food Control Commission, something that severely inconvenienced customers. The shops were closed on Monday and Thursday and had limited hours during the remainder of the week, but were then allowed to sell leftovers, without coupons, on Saturday evenings.

Reading's food situation was made worse by a fire in the early hours of 25 June. A fire on the premises of Caversham photographer Green's, at 4 Church Street, spread before it could be contained by the Fire Brigade. As a result £1,500 worth of groceries were destroyed in the warehouse of Baylis & Co.

Just three months after the publication of coal prices, up they went again. Best coal was now 40s a ton, an increase of 2s when sold by authorised merchants. It was more expensive from hawkers and other sellers. During the summer prices went up again to 1s 6d/ton or 1d/cwt after 8 July.

Tobacco was in short supply but a local 'lover of the weed', as he called himself, had an answer which he shared with readers of the *Chronicle*. For some months he had smoked a mixture of spent tea

Cut out and keep this notice. Show it to everyone in your household.

Notes on Saving

No. 11.—How to save on Odds and Ends.

When you get a parcel, untie the string. Don't cut it. Keep both string and paper.

Save all clean newspaper. You can sell what you cannot use. Your tradesman can tell you the address of the nearest Paper-Dealer.

Make spills to save matches. Even in summer they are useful in the kitchen.

Never throw away an unbroken bottle. The chemist needs medicine bottles; the fruiterer needs jam jars and fruit-bottles.

The Marine Store Dealer—the Rag-and-Bone Man—wants empty tins, as well as rags and bones. Save them and sell to him. They will be used for making Munitions

Stopping Waste means Saving Money.

NATIONAL WAR SAVINGS

War Savings Certificates are a British Government Investment backed by all the wealth and power of the nation.

Their purchase price is 15/6 each, and their value in 5 years' time £1 each—this is equivalent to compound interest at 5¼ per cent., free of Income Tax.

You can get your money back in full at any time with any interest which is due.

You can buy War Savings Certificates from any Money Order Post Office, Bank, or Shopkeeper acting as Official Agent.

Invest your Savings in

War Savings Certificates

£1 for 15/6 £50 for £38:15:0 £500 for £387:10:0

If you have not yet joined a War Savings Association, it is your patriotic duty to do so. Apply to the Secretary of your Local War Savings Committee, or write to the National War Savings Committee, Salisbury Square, London, E.C. 4.

Every Shilling saved and lent helps to win the War.

Waste not, want not and what to do with your money. Note the symbol in the top right corner. In 1918 it did not have the same meaning as now.

leaves and tobacco – half and half. Four of five male smokers who tried the mixture could not tell the difference between it and tobacco and the writer felt it was better than plain tobacco. It was better to use dried spent leaves because they contained less tannic acid.

Once again the Tobacco Fund appealed for money, being £600 short of requirements. For the nine battalions they were supplying for the six months until the New Year, they needed to raise £1,000. By August they were still short of money and were threatening to close.

Shortly after the start of the war, papers had reduced their frequency and later the number of pages. By late May the shortage was severe and getting worse. Stanley Oxley, Berkshire County Organiser of waste-paper supplies, announced the impending severe shortage and stressed that, without paper, business and government could not function. It was 'essential that all possible supplies of paper-making material should be utilised'. The principal source was waste paper but cloth could also be used. Oxley urged that 'old collars, cotton and linen underclothing, window curtains, flannelette and all rag waste of vegetable fibre' should be taken to the nearest dealer.

The seriousness of the shortage is shown by a diary entry made by a Suttons' employee about a notice erected on 6 June. 'New postal rates and paper restrictions order. Need for increased economy. Postcards should be used whenever possible for brief correspondence. Stamped reply envelopes should not be enclosed, except when necessary, and postcards should generally be used for this purpose. The paper shortage is so acute that paper and envelopes must be used sparingly.'

Rail travel was no longer as pleasant or easy as in previous years. This was obviously partly due to the call-up of the youngest and fittest rail workers for the railways abroad. In addition, there were 600 locomotives working in France, numerous wagons and 200 miles of English track that had been laid there.

One family, already grieving for two sons, received news of yet further loss. The ex-mayor of Reading and director of Suttons Seeds had lost a son in April 1916 – Lieutenant Eric serving with the Royal Sussex Regiment – a second in November – 2 Lieutenant William serving in the Berkshire Yeomanry – a third in January – 2nd Lieutenant Alexander serving with the Rifle Brigade – and now a fourth in March 1918. Lieutenant Eustace RE had been sniped while leading a counter-attack made up of signallers and other HQ men, in an attempt to stop a German attack on battalion headquarters. He had another son serving who was wounded during the year.

In May, the Loder-Symonds family received news of the death of their son, Captain William Loder-Symonds, in a flying accident. He had fought in the 1914 campaign, spent three-and-a-half years as a PoW before escaping, on his sixth attempt, to Holland. Although offered a staff job and three months' leave, he opted to train as a pilot, only to crash in Norfolk while training. Three other sons had already

Major Aylmer Fleet MC, only son of Vice-Admiral Fleet of The Camber, Coley Avenue, was killed in action in France on 10 September 1918. His father, mentioned previously in the book, was an important member of the Red Cross and VAD associations.

Lieutenant Eustace Sutton was killed in action on 24 March 1918 aged twenty-two. He was the fourth son to be killed.

been killed during the war. These featured in the Roll of Honour at the end of April in which eight soldiers were commemorated, of whom five were only sons.

A grievous loss to supporters of Reading F.C. was one of their best half-backs, Corporal Percy Slatter of the Oxfordshire Heavy RGA, who died of wounds on 7 May. He had helped the Reserves win the Great Western Suburban League before playing regularly for the 1st XI. He had joined up three years before and served in France for two years. When not playing football, he was a rate collector for the council.

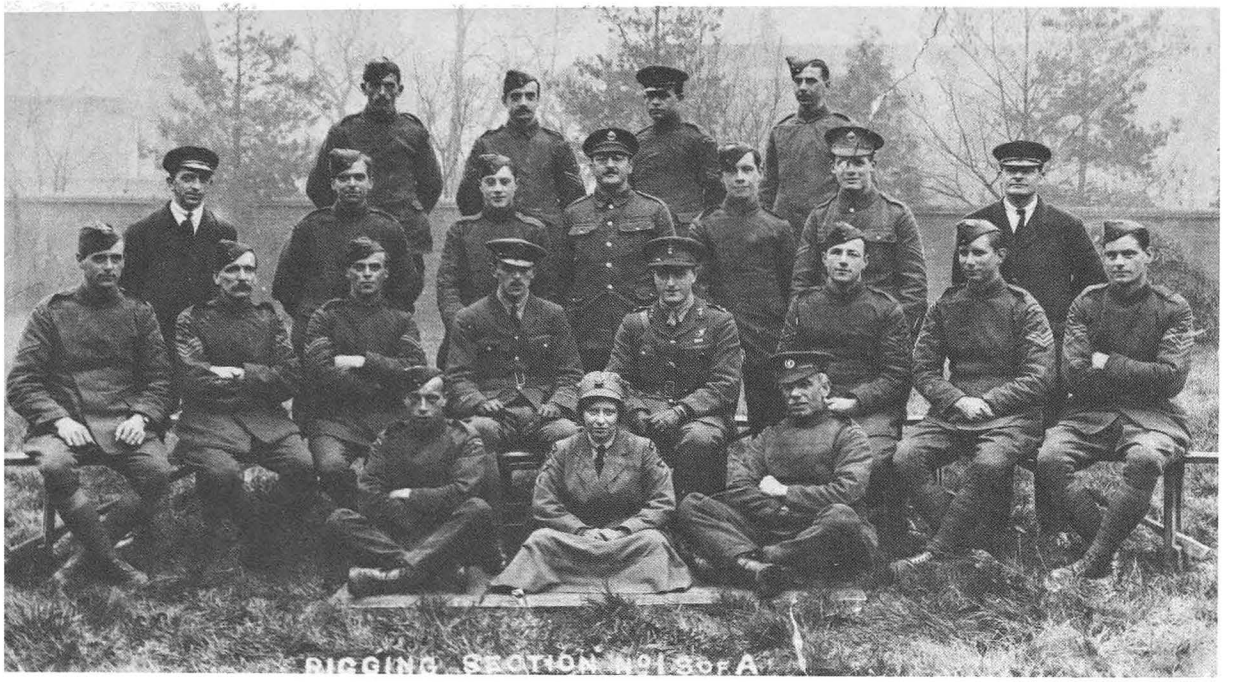
The War Office made many mistakes when reporting the status of a casualty. More often they raised hope only to dash it later by their telegrams. In contrast, Mr and Mrs Deadman, of Lund's Farm in Woodley, received a notice from the War Office that their son Private Sydney Deadman of the Wiltshire Regiment had been killed in action on 24 March. The family went into mourning and a memorial service

was held in Woodley Church on 21 April. Shortly afterwards they received a request for cigarettes from him. He had written from a PoW camp in Germany where he was recovering from wounds in both legs.

Of course deaths were reported frequently, but local deaths, even if not of a resident, generally were of great interest, especially if it was about a German serving in the British army. Private Jacob (Jack) Goetz, a well-known boxer and wrestler, from Fulham, serving with 30 Middlesex Regiment, was stationed in Reading. He was seen hanging on to the rear of a van while riding a bike in the direction of Twyford. At Shepherds House Hill he swerved right in front of a motor bus en route to Reading. The driver was unable to avoid him. Death was instantaneous. His head was smashed and his body was 'so wedged in between the wheel and the engine that the front part of the bus had to be partly taken to pieces before his body could be extricated. The bike was wrecked.'

Close to Private Gatehouse's headstone is one for Private Broad, also nineteen. He was the son of Mark and Harriet Broad of 21 Clarendon Road, Earley.

Brigadier General Richard Kelly was the only general to be buried in Reading during the war. Interestingly, like Private Gatehouse in the same cemetery, he does not have a CWGC headstone. Kelly is buried next to his father, who was also a general.

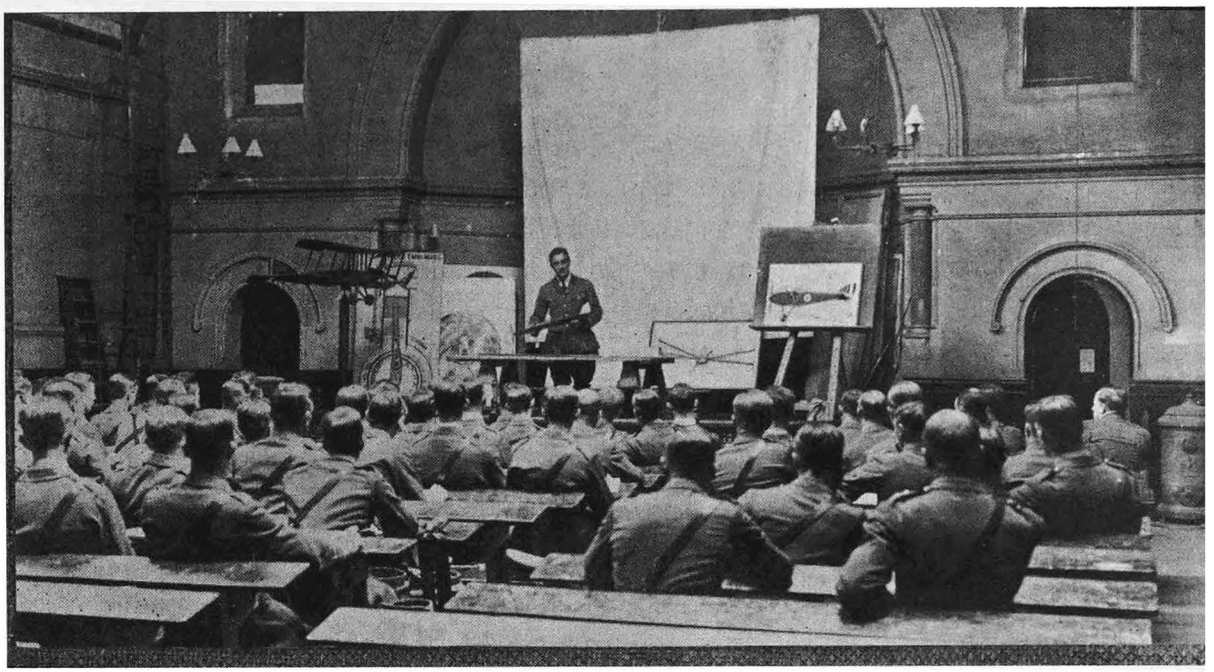


The rigging section of No.1 School of Aeronautics. Centre front is Elsie Taylor. Although the photo was taken after the formation of the RAF, the men are still wearing RFC shoulder titles.

The death of fathers and sons in the war has been noted. Less common was the death of the mother. In April sympathy was expressed to Swallowfield resident, Pioneer Charles Cox, serving in France with the Royal Engineers. His wife, who had been ill for some time, died while he was in hospital in France, leaving four small children motherless.

While no one living in Reading died from an air raid, one Reading man suffered that fate. After eighteen months' service at the front, eighteen-year-old First Air Mechanic Albert Schneiders, RFC, of The Chase, Redlands Road, was killed during a German air raid. A bomb fell on his hut, injuring him in two places. He died without regaining consciousness.

Aeroplanes were also potentially dangerous as one Reading civilian found out. At the end of May, Mr Cyril Winch, of Brisbane Road, was in a 'critical condition in Weston-super-Mare hospital, suffering from a wound in the left side, compound fracture of the arm, and other injuries sustained during the re-starting of an aeroplane which alighted on the sands…The pilot requisitioned amateur aid in re-starting but this proved insufficient, and the plane charged full into a multitude of



Training the pilots of the future in The Great Hall at University College.

spectators, the propeller striking down three persons amid a great panic…Winch's was the only serious case.' He was operated on that same evening. It is ironical that he had gone to Weston-super-Mare for the benefit of his health.

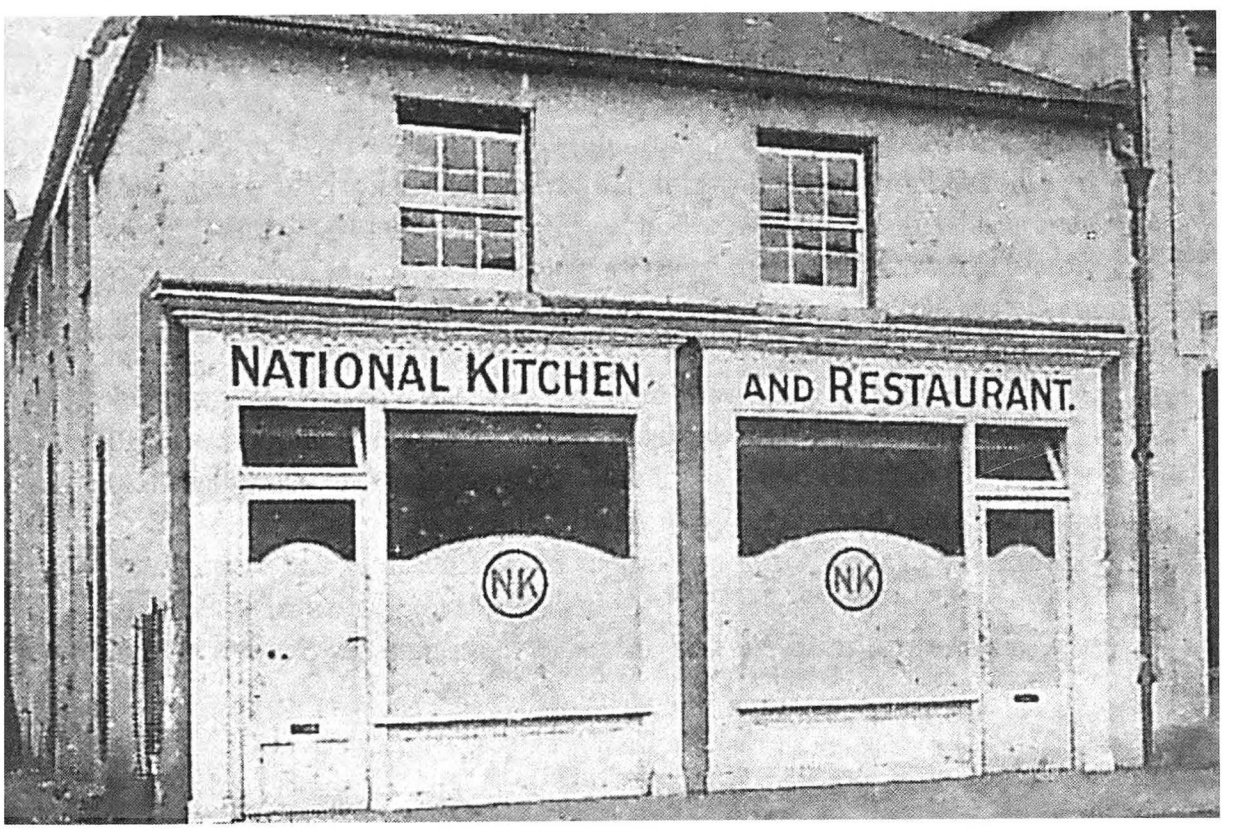
Although there were no air raids on Reading, the town did suffer indirectly from the air raids on London. The Medical Officer of Health reported that, by May, there was an average number of 2,500 air raid refugees in Reading on any one day. Many had set up home in the area and some were living in overcrowded conditions, though some had been induced to leave the town. Their presence put a constant strain on food supplies and on the education system. The number of school children on register had risen from 14,840 in 1917 to 15,486 at the end of March.

As had been noted in the National Baby Week statistics, the death rate among the young was high. In April, two such deaths were reported. The first was the child of a domestic servant, Ethel Hopkins of 28 Boults Walk, who died in the RBH after an operation to resolve damage caused in childbirth. At the house where she had worked, a parlour maid found a dead baby concealed in a dressing case. The illegitimate baby had died shortly after birth; the mother had suffered an internal haemorrhage caused by lack of proper attention. The second

was the son of Ada Cook, a domestic servant of no fixed abode, who was charged on remand with abandoning him in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering and injury to health.

The case was acquitted due to a lack of evidence but was re-opened a few days later. She was re-arrested and charged with 'feloniously and wilfully, and of malice aforethought, killed and murdered her son, Stanley Cook.' At that time she was resident at 9 New Town Gardens, Henley, her father's house who according to one writer was not a pleasant character and was almost certainly the father of her child. Her son, aged two years nine months had been found in the River Kennet, a gag fastened tightly over his mouth. At the previous court case the police had not taken the magistrate's clerk's advice to have the child put in a home. After enquiries it was found the father of the child was unknown. The child was looked after by Cook's father's first cousin. The body had been in the water about four weeks when discovered so no cause of death could be ascertained because of severe decomposition. However, Dr House, the police surgeon, was almost

A National Kitchen and Restaurant was opened at the request of the Ministry of Food to save fuel and labour. The Tudor Road Kitchen was open for the sale of cooked food for dinner every day except Sunday, from 11.30 am to 2 pm.



certain it was suffocation before or after being placed in the water. The child would have died within four minutes of the gagging and the hanky would have stopped it crying out. There were no signs of external violence and the baby had been well fed and was well grown. He was fully dressed; over his face and head were a jacket with the sleeves tied behind the head, partly kept in place by a piece of red ribbon, while wound three times round the mouth and nose was a piece of strong cloth, about two inches wide. The mouth was stuffed with a pocket handkerchief. After the inquest, Cook admitted drowning the child on the night she had gone to London with a soldier.

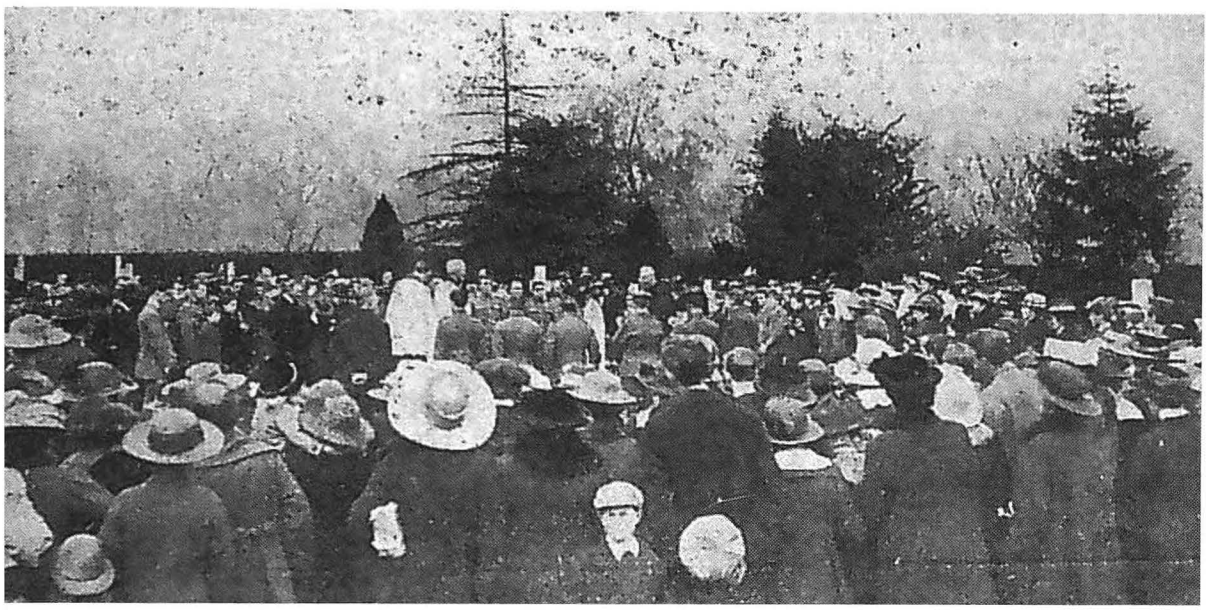
She was then committed for trial at the Assizes charged with wilful murder. At the trial, the jury took just twelve minutes to find her guilty but added a recommendation for mercy. She was duly sentenced. Her appeal a few weeks later failed and the death sentence confirmed. However, for reasons unknown, her sentence was commuted to life and she was transferred to Liverpool. She was released on licence in May 1923 and moved to London to start a new life.

These were not isolated cases. Ellen Edwards had attempted to kill her son but because she was suicidal was merely bound over. Annie Smith of Maidenhead was charged with wilfully murdering her illegitimate child by strangulation and sent for trial at the Assizes.

Mention has been made of hospital beds being endowed as a memorial. The mother of Private Frederick Reginald Johnson of 57 Company MGC, who was killed shortly after being awarded the DCM, decided on a different way to remember her only son. She invested his savings in a war loan and used the interest to set up 'The Johnson Benevolent Fund'. This was to help in cases of sickness among the men and boys of the choir of All Saints Church in which he had taken great interest.

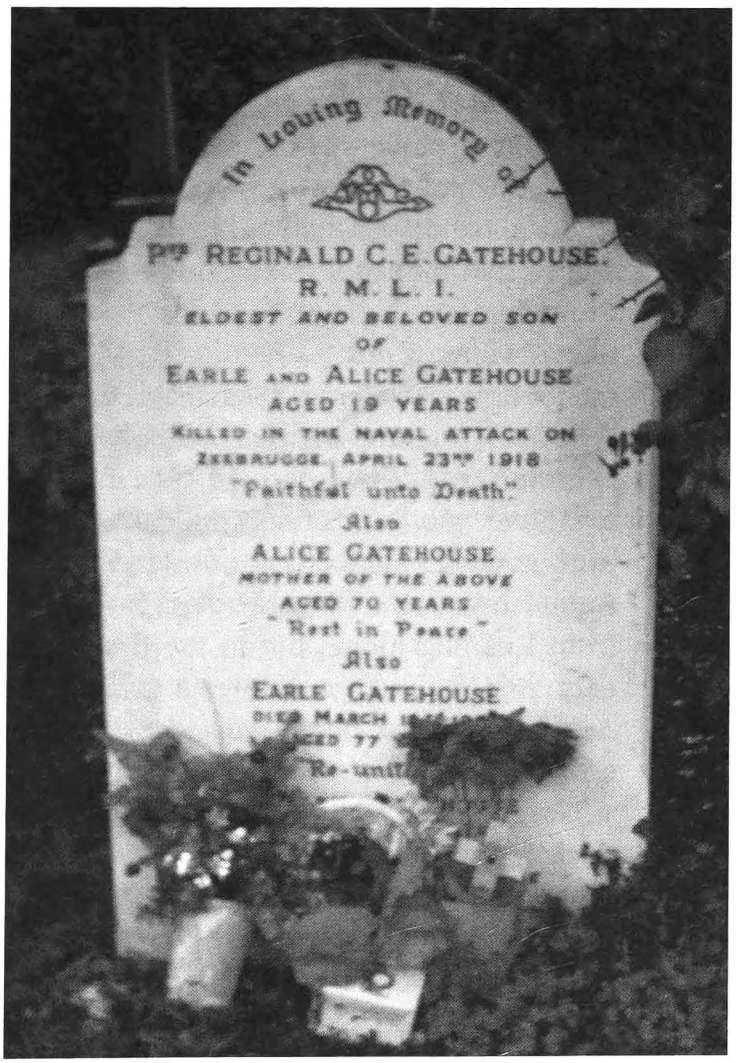
At the end of March the papers reported to their readers how the Royal Berks were playing their part nobly against the German offensive and later that they displayed exceptional gallantry in very severe fighting with heavy casualties. The sting was that 'many of the men in the battalion belong to Reading'. The length of the casualty list once more increased.

The seriousness of the situation in France was not lost on the volunteer force that appealed to the employers and employees to help raise 400 more recruits so that Berkshire had a full battalion to aid the



The funeral of Private Gatehouse in Earley St Peter's churchyard.

Private Reginald Gatehouse, RMLI, of 6 Clarendon Road, Earley, is buried in St Peter's Church graveyard. He was killed during the raid on Zeebrugge on 23 April 1918 at the age of nineteen. Although under age he had enlisted in October 1914 and fought in the Dardanelles.



Headstone for Private Gatehouse.

country in case of the worst happening. To achieve this came a recruiting week in which to encourage enrolment, able-bodied men were asked to look at the pictures of Belgium and Northern France and imagine what would happen if the Germans were allowed to gain a foothold in Britain.

During April, Reading held a week of special events: open-air meetings at Caversham Bridge, outside the Cemetery Gates and on the Oxford Road. The finale was held outside the Volunteers' Headquarters in St Mary's Butts, and as part of the week's events, they held a smoking concert. The purpose of all this activity was to increase membership of the Volunteer Force.

In other parts of the county there was a similar shortage. So low was the response in Newbury that a full-page advertisement was taken out in the local paper, chastising the men of the district, noting that, out of a population of 10,000, less than a hundred had enrolled. Towns and villages like Hungerford, Kingsclere, Kintbury, Lambourne, Stockcross, Thatcham, Cold Ash and Woodhay had no members at all. Men were exhorted to 'Play the MAN...Justify your manhood.' As in Reading, the drive culminated in a smokers' concert. Across the county 700 signed on. The authorities had hoped for 200 from Reading alone, but in the first week only fifty joined. Rather more successful was the request for cars to be placed at the disposal of the military in the event of an invasion.

A Berkshire Volunteer Regiment soldier, with medal ribbons showing he has served abroad at some time in the nineteenth century. His rifle is an obsolete Martini-Enfield.303.

A more successful volunteer group was the Berkshire Women's Volunteers. By Easter Monday they were in their fourth year of staffing The Sailors' and Soldiers' Free Canteen which was situated on the SER Reading Station. It had been donated by Sir Francis Dent and his board of directors. Biscuits were provided free of

A female employee of the Naval and Army Canteen Board in Reading. The NACB organised canteens and procured food supplies for the British armed forces at home.

charge by Huntley & Palmers, and similarly the tea and coffee were provided by Messrs Salmon.

After all the effort to get men for the Volunteers the government raised the service age. This took away the best soldiers but in return guaranteed numbers, as any one exempted after 30 April had to join the volunteers.

In the ranks of the Berkshire Volunteers was William Moore. At seventy-six he was the oldest member and volunteered for three months' special service on the coast. He was an original volunteer from the period before the Territorial Force was introduced and had been the head of Greyfriars School. Even at his advanced age, he was an excellent marksman.

The tribunal continued to hear reasons why they should not call up men like C.A. Hawkins, grade 2, married, leather worker, and Marcus Adams, grade 2, married, photographer. Both of these were enlisted,

but a week later men in the lower categories of B3, C3 or grade 3 were given an opt-out. If they were not already in agriculture or an accessory industry, they could enrol as a war agricultural volunteer. This would enable them to serve their country while being protected from military service.

Women were also making a contribution to agricultural output. The Berkshire Agricultural War Committee had placed 200 Land Girls across Berkshire to work on farms. In addition there were already between 1,400 and 1,500 full or part-time women working the land in Berkshire. In an attempt to raise their profile and get more recruits, there was a procession of seventy Land Girls through Reading in July. Attention centred on four tractor girls who during the spring had ploughed 200 acres including some difficult land that men had refused to plough. The procession was led by two women on horseback; bringing up the rear was a tractor.

This was followed in August by a meeting in Market Place that was well attended in spite of the rain. This was part of the campaign to raise 1,500 women for the QMAAC, VAD, WRNS, WAAC, Women's Legion and the Land Girls. A recruitment office had been opened at Heelas where applicants could obtain full particulars of service. It was hoped that 200 would enlist.

The raising of the service age was a cause for concern because of the level of their knowledge and skills. If they were

Private Horace Povey had served with the 4th and 6th battalions and been wounded three times before he transferred to the 1st Battalion. He was killed in action on 23 August 1918. His parents lived at 17 Wilton Road. The reverse asks for the photo to be returned to Miss H. Robbins of Leopold House, Tilehurst Road. His fiancée perhaps?

A member of the Women's Land Army poses proudly.

killed they could not train the next generation. At the same time came a change in the 1915 National Registration Act. The 1918 Act required all males between fifteen and sixty-five to register, including discharged sailors and soldiers as well as aliens. Failure to register was up to £5, and £1 a day if the offence was continued.

With the majority of the young men in the army, the tribunals now looked at applications from older men, mostly married and with families. The following are typical cases during the summer. F.G. Josey, grade 1, a married forty-three-year-old carpenter, was refused. T. Higgs, grade 1, married, conscientious objector, forty-three-year-old draper, was given conditional exemption on doing work of national importance; H.E. Lott, grade 2, married, forty-three-year-old tobacconist, was refused but was not to be called up before 1 September. A. Davis, grade 2, married, forty-two-year-old porter at Leighton Park School, was given three months before call up with leave to appeal the decision.

By September the tribunals were looking at a considerably older age group, the over fifties. Even working in a certified occupation did not guarantee exemption at this stage in the war. W. Holmes, a fifty-one-year-old married man, was given six months extra before being called up. He was an undertaker and house finisher and in a certified occupation. Six months were also given to H. Isaacs, a fifty-one-year-old boat-builder, who ran a boat a day just for wounded soldiers. These men were lucky the war had ended before their call-up date. A month later, the exemptions were until the end of the year or as far ahead as April.

As the number of medically discharged soldiers increased, the council felt it needed to help their transition back into civilian life. The Education Committee started up a class of instruction in lip-reading for sailors and soldiers suffering from deafness due to, or aggravated by, war service at Swansea Road Council School. It ran from 4 May to 20 July. Admission was free for all men recommended by the Special Aural Board. Travel expenses were met by the local Pensions Committee.

In April, a Clerical Baronet was sentenced to eighteen months with hard labour for bigamy and obtaining a naval uniform by false pretences. The Reverend Sir Douglas Scott, 54, of Theale had told Miss Williams, an assistant at the Reading Station refreshment room, that

his wife had died two years before. He had obtained the naval uniform and decorations using false cheques. This was the second time he had tried to commit the offence but the previous one had ended before the marriage. It was alleged he was the father of the woman's child. He had been ordained in 1905 and succeeded to the Baronetcy when his cousin died and he inherited £11,000. His conduct was characterised as disgraceful. A serving soldier, Albert Herbert, who had served in France and only married to stop the woman committing suicide, received twelve months with hard labour, while Beatrice Brooks only received a month's hard labour.

The financial and fixture problems of Reading F.C. appeared to be over during Easter. By holding a charity match and two concerts, they raised £115. Now financially secure, they were able to announce that a series of matches would be played at Elm Park. Unfortunately, as their players were serving in the forces, the matches would be with international or local teams. The Easter Monday match was between Canada and America, followed by Canada (Bearwood convalescents and staff) v Munition Workers and Herbert's (Caversham) v Thornycroft's (Basingstoke).

While Reading F.C. seemed to be over the worst, Reading Council was having to make difficult decisions because of rising costs. An expected advance of 4d on the education rate would cost £8,000 and, although revenue was sufficient because of profits made by the trams, there was a concern that there would be an economic downturn when the war was over. It was an expensive year with all departments wanting more and revenues being reduced. The Waterworks had made £1,400 less profit and the Farm needed £2,500 more. The answer was a rise of 8d in the pound on the rates. It was not long before Berkshire County Council raised its rates by 5½d in the pound.

Apart from the Christmas period, little had been heard about the Post Office. Then, after nearly four years of holding its prices steady, it announced new postage rates from 2 June. A postcard would cost 1d to send (up ½d), and a penny letter went up to 1½d, but a letter to the forces remained at 1d.

Part of the need to increase the rates was brought about by rising wages. Berkshire Education Committee raised teachers' wages again, with different rates, except for untrained teachers, for men and women even for the top jobs. In the largest schools, male head teachers

120 WOMEN URGENTLY WANTED

FOR

MUNITIONS WORK

In a NATIONAL FILLING FACTORY, near OXFORD.

STRONG BRITISH WOMEN—Age 18-45

Especially suitable.

No one already on Government work will be engaged.

GOOD WAGES.

Hostel and Lodging Accommodation Available.

Call at your Local Employment Exchange or fill in this form and post it **to-day** to the Employment Exchange, 29—31, London Street, Reading.

Please send me application form for Employment in National Filling Factory near Oxford.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Application form for a well-paid but dangerous job. Many of the applicants would have been trained in Reading at the University College Munitions School.

received a £50 rise in five annual increments, followed by a further £60 in £10 increments biennially, reaching a maximum of £300. For the single female head of such a school the rise was initially the same but the second part of the package saw her final salary rise only to £225 after a further four years.

Some workers had to resort to strike action to get a raise. About 1,000 car men and other vehicle workers in Reading went on strike on Tuesday, 6 August over a wage dispute. Munitions workers had received 12.5 per cent so they wanted the same. It was over by Wednesday morning when the employers agreed to a 5s increase. The dustmen had also gone out on strike on Monday but the council agreed almost immediately and work resumed on Tuesday. They also agreed a similar advance to all carters, drivers of steam wagons and all men engaged in the stables.

A month later, Reading, like other places in the GWR system, was seriously affected by the railway strike. 'The majority of the drivers, firemen and cleaners at Reading left at 6 a.m. on 24 September and a meeting later passed "that this mass meeting of railway workers, being dissatisfied with the recent settlement, have unanimously decided to cease work, as a protest against it…we regret this course of action".' However, they would work ambulance trains. The suddenness of the strike and the rapidity with which it spread resulted in great inconvenience to the ordinary traveller. Some trains ran on time, others were late and in total only twenty trains arrived from Paddington in the day. Branch services were mostly maintained but the Henley line was especially badly affected. Those trains that ran often stopped at more stations than scheduled. However, on one occasion passengers who arrived from Henley to change at Twyford found that there were no more stopping trains. They had to continue their journey to Reading, six miles, on foot. Most goods trains were cancelled but fortunately the low temperatures saved most of the perishable goods. To effect the movement of milk from Wiltshire to London, a number of Reading tradesmen had their motor-vans and drivers commandeered, to replace trains.

The next day the SER ran mostly as normal but the LSWR service was considerably curtailed. Overall, there were more trains on the Wednesday, especially expresses. By Thursday, all Reading strikers had returned with the exception of four, but this did not return the service to normal because the Slough members were still out.

To show their resentment at the strike, wounded soldiers attacked the Trades Union Club on the Oxford Road, the Headquarters of the NUR, doing serious damage to the windows and glass door. At around 6.30 pm, about eighty of the wounded assembled, armed with sticks and stones and pieces of brick, which they threw at the windows while using their crutches as weapons. The few police available were unable to stop the rush on the building and the crowd forced its way upstairs. Violence ensued. PC Phillips was struck by a stick, another policeman was struck in the stomach by a chair thrown down the stairs, a railwayman was hit on the head with a chair, and PC Flitter was struck in the eye by a bagatelle ball causing blood to run down his face and on to his tunic. After some parleying, one of the wounded mounted a chair and told the strikers that they would certainly be represented at

the union meeting the next day. Order was restored when they left. The next day the wounded went to Reading Fair Ground but finding no meeting, walked around the town looking for strikers.

What was not obvious was the amount of work drivers and firemen were putting in as more and more men were called up. A shift worked by a Reading driver, Dick Davey, in August 1917, is illustrative of the pressure the railways were under. 'On 10 August...worked from his home shed to Plymouth in a continuous, 24-hour journey, rested there and at 4 a.m. on the 12th set out with a special for Acton. Over eight hours' travelling found him at Taunton, where he asked that relief be provided for him and his mate at Westbury and pressed slowly and doggedly on. Six hours later he steamed into Westbury, forty-four miles from Taunton, to discover there was no relief whereupon he promptly backed the whole train, engine and all, into the yard and went home in the brake van of the 4.30 p.m. Weymouth to Clapham Junction milk train, booking off in Reading after nineteen hours on the road and having been away from home for three days.'

When one group of workers received a wage increase, every other group wanted parity. While some had already been on strike, one union asked politely. Reading Wages Committee received a letter from the National Union of General Workers: 'Our members in the employ of the Corporation have held a meeting, and I have been directed on their behalf to ask if the Corporation would be good enough to grant them an advance of 2s 8d a week on their present rate and a week's holiday each year with pay.' This request was a direct result of other sections having already received an advance. The police also requested an increase. And once again tramway employees were granted extra. All employees over twenty-one were to receive a war allowance of 25s a week while all office assistants in any council department received a war bonus of 20s a week.

It was not so simple for the Fire Brigade or workers at Manor Farm. A back-dated war allowance of £1 a week was recommended for motor mechanics, sub-engineers and firemen on the permanent staff. Retained firemen were to be paid a retaining fee of £3, increased from £2, and the attendance allowance at a fire was to be increased to 2s 6d for the first hour and 1s 6d for each successive hour. Attendance at drill increased from 1s to 2s an hour. It was recommended that they were paid for the time taken to change into dry clothes after a fire, but

refreshments at a fire were at the discretion of the Chief Officer of the Brigade.

Wages on the farm were fixed by the Agricultural Wages Board for Berkshire. The hours of work for agricultural workers were fifty-four in the summer (first Monday in March and last Sunday in October) and forty-eight in the winter. The minimum weekly wage for a general labourer over eighteen was 30s with overtime rates of 8½d with 10d on Sunday. The rates decreased in proportion to youth with under fourteen workers receiving 10s a week with overtime of 3d and 3½d on Sunday. At Manor Farm a general labourer received 23s plus a war bonus of 15s 6d.

A year after the last attempt was made to stop the smell at Manor Farm, there had still been no abatement in complaints. Now it was decided that chloride of lime would be used and the amount of land used for discharge was to be increased.

Reading courts dealt with numerous cases of absence without leave but few of real desertion. In June the case of James Gibbs of 28 Orts Road came before the Bench. He was convicted of assisting his son, Frederick, a deserter from the RAF, to conceal himself between 29 January and 3 June. His excuse was that he did not want his son's death on his conscience as he had been in ill health and threatened to kill himself. Although the Bench regarded this as a serious case, they took into account the circumstances and bound him over for six months with 4s costs.

In the summer came a happier story about babies. On 16 June, Mrs Gertrude Maule, of 17 Elm Park Road, had triplets, two girls and a boy. She already had three sons and a daughter. All were doing well when the mayor brought the case to the notice of the King. As a result she received the King's Bounty of £3 which he was pleased to give to mothers who had triplets all of whom survived. Whether she had to give it back when one sadly died within a month of birth was not recorded.

Reading also decided to once again follow London and hold a Baby Week. It centred around free conferences with important speakers such as Lady Helmsley, an advocate of day nurseries. Naturally there was a baby parade and competitions for the best baby overalls, jointly won by Mrs Silver and Mrs Wheeler, the best baby knits jointly won by Mrs Silver and Mrs Eustace, best laundry by Mesdames Hicks, Sparks,

Winter and Salt, while the award for the best adapted garment went to Mrs Silver and Mrs Empson. Following on from concerns expressed in previous years about baby health, home health visiting by district nurses and midwives began during the year.

Broad Street was treated to an unusual sight on U.S. Independence Day; a swarm of bees appeared creating 'much interest and not a little concern. For two hours the bees endeavoured to settle but the traffic made it impossible.' Eventually Mr C. Howlett caught the Queen in a box and the swarm settled down before dispersing.

For the King and Queen's Silver Wedding, the mayor received in his parlour gifts for the double object of raising funds for the sick, wounded and PoWs, and of helping the Royal Mint, in connection with the anniversary. The bulk of the silver collected was sold to the mint as bullion, but any gold or silver objects of historic or artistic interest were sold.

After four years of war the government decided to provide the public with information on its activities. On Monday 15 July, at 3pm, the mayor opened a Government Information Bureau in Boots the Chemists at 90-91 Broad Street. It provided the public with publications provided free by the Ministries of Labour, Munitions, Pensions, Food, National Service, War Savings, the National War Aims and the Board of Agriculture.

The day before the start of the 100 days' campaign on the Western Front, there was a huge gathering at the depot recreation ground at Arborfield Cross. This was for the athletic sports and vegetable show held by No.4 Remount Depot. Also included in the show were equestrian events, a baby show and a rabbit and goat show. Sideshows included bowling for a pig, won by Mr Tubb of Bearwood, and a guessing competition won by Mrs Bosley. The various sports included throwing a cricket ball, kicking a football, a three-mile marathon, 100 yards backwards, an over forty-five 120 yard race, tilting the bucket, a wheelbarrow race and a three-legged race. In the tug-of-war twelve girls beat ten boys, Mrs Wood won the married ladies' egg and spoon, and Corporal Slade won the sack race with a jump over the finishing line. The 1917 baby competition was a dead heat with Mrs Gale and Mrs Baker taking first prize while Mrs Willoughby was the clear winner of the Best Baby born in 1918 competition. Her husband had considerable success in the vegetable show. Private Kew exhibited the

Members of the Women's Forage Corps, part of the Land Army. Taken in August, this group stayed in Reading on their way to Newbury to bale hay.

best buck and doe rabbit and had the best nanny goat. Music was provided by the Royal Berks Depot band with dancing in the evening.

This was followed by the Reading and District Dairymen's and Cow-keepers' Association show in Elm Park. This was held to raise funds for the Berkshire PoW Fund and had sixty more entries than in

1917. Mr Spice of Caversham showed 173 tubers grown from one potato. He also won third prize for spring onions and turnip. The heaviest marrow prize was won by W. Farmer. There were also sports competitions.

Lifeboat day was on 10 August with money being collected for the RNLI. Their war record was impeccable as by 1918 their average age was over fifty. In four years they had salvaged 150 boats and saved nearly 5,000 lives, 1,500 from vessels mined, torpedoed or otherwise destroyed by the enemy. In the last year they had saved 1,348 lives.

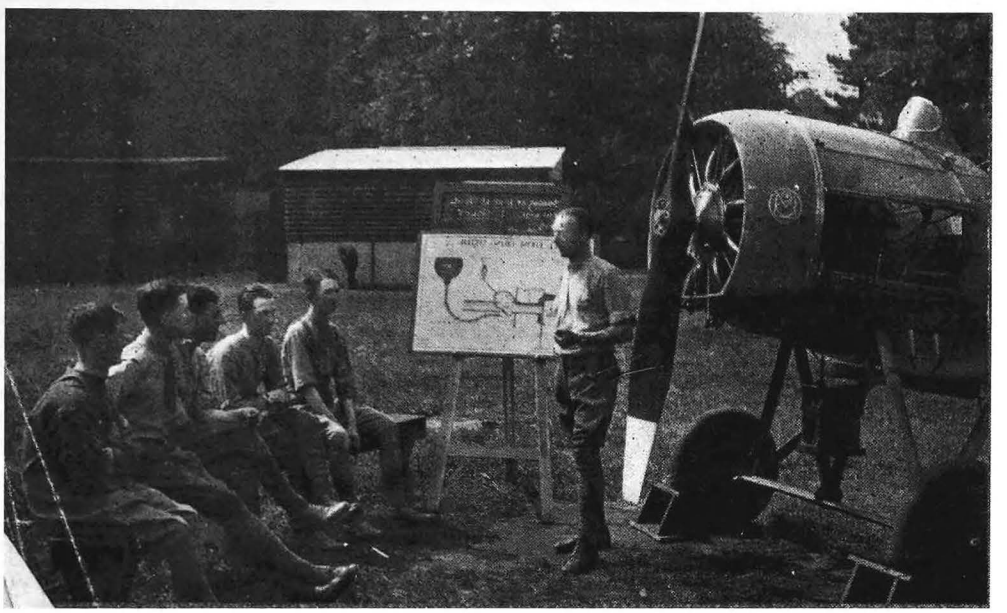
Miss Florence Faithfull, a VAD nurse, second child of Lieutenant Colonel W. C. and Mrs Faithfull, of 26 Upper Redlands Road, was accidentally drowned on duty.

Reading had entertained troops from all over Britain, itinerant Australians and numerous Canadians. In late 1918 Sol Joel entertained locally stationed American troops and Red Cross nurses. On several Sundays he provided them with free launch trips on the river, luncheon and tea.

Although there were no official regattas, there was an international one held on the Thames at Caversham in late September. The weather was quite cold but a large number attended to watch. The main competition, eights, was between Australia, New Zealand and two RAF teams. Numerous other competitions included single sculls, open fours, gents' doubles, mixed doubles, ladies' doubles, a 100 yard swimming race, the tug-of-war, dongola race, canoe singles and walking the greasy pole. This was won by Cadet Hewitt of RAF Reading.

On 2 August, the Kensington Road ground played host to a powerful England XI captained by Captain Pelham F. Warner, who played for No.1 School of Aeronautics. The RAF were all out for 138, the more powerful England team making 309 for seven declared.

While other such shows had been cancelled because of the war, the 64th South Berkshire Agricultural Association show was held as normal at Beansheaf Farm in Theale. Naturally, the general standard was not as high as in pre-war days. Events included ploughing, the Champion Prize going to G. Hearne employed by Mr Benyon, tractor



Explaining the principles of a feed mechanism to new recruits at No.1 School of Aeronautics.

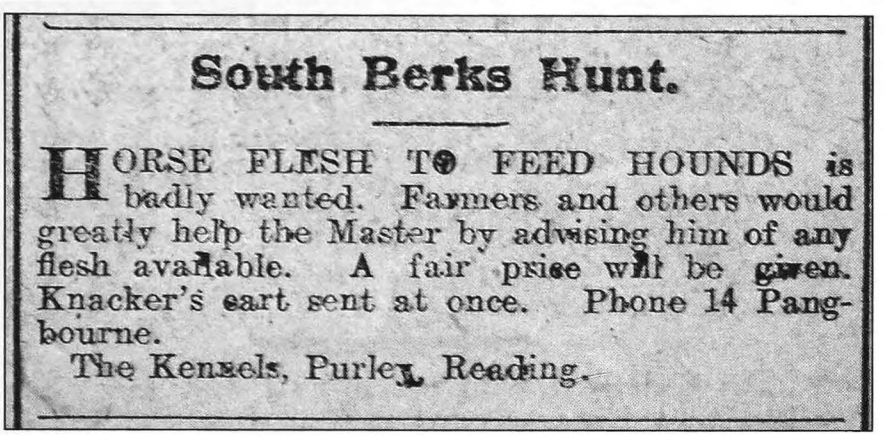
ploughing, ploughing with two horses, boys' under twenty ploughing, double furrow ploughing, rick building, thatching, milking and women milkers. In the root competition, G. Layley displayed the longest mangold, L. Pearce had the best collection of roots while W. Cumber had the best turnips. Following his success with roots, Mr Pearce also had the best duck eggs and best white eggs. In the horse section, Mr Benyon offered a stud prize which his horse won.

Earlier in the year the numerous hunts had decided to cease their activities. Suddenly in the middle of October they resumed hunting with meets at Kipping Hill, Elm Tree, Beech Hill, Shefford and Rockley. Was this due to an increase in provender or were the foxes getting out of control?

Even with the end of the war only weeks away, pressure on the pockets of Reading's citizens continued. Most Flag and collection days were just that – days – but the YMCA had a week of fund-raising planned at the end of October. It started with a meeting and concert on 13 October with a street demonstration on 20 October. The real fund-raising was in Hut Week from 21 to 27 October with house-to-house

Recruiting parade on 5 July for the Women's Land Army. With 100 new recruits in one day, it was classed as a great success.

Land Army girls trained to use a tractor proudly display how much land they have ploughed. Left to right: Miss J.M. Smith, Miss Thompson and Miss Kisiclowski, a Pole.



South Berks Hunt.

HORSE FLESH TO FEED HOUNDS is badly wanted. Farmers and others would greatly help the Master by advising him of any flesh available. A fair price will be given. Knacker's cart sent at once. Phone 14 Pangbourne.

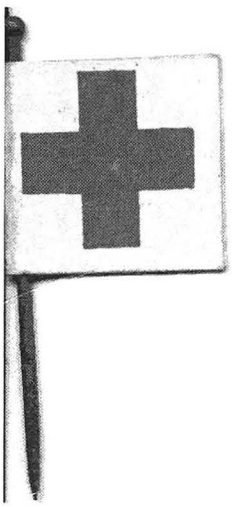
The Kennels, Purley, Reading.

Just as the war was ending the South Berks Hunt restarted fox hunting. There was no shortage of provender now the harvest was in but there was a shortage of food for the hounds.

collections throughout the town, street collections, church collections and a flag day. On 26 October, the mayor inaugurated a Penny Trail near the GPO in Broad Street; a novel idea that attracted many to watch and contribute. The trail spread along the street rapidly and not just with 1d coins. Outside Heelas some put down £1 and 10s treasury notes. Heelas had lined the 113 foot frontage of their store with £4 15s worth of pennies. When the trail was collected in the afternoon it had raised £101 10s 3d, under half the target of 50,668 (£211 4s). However, this was boosted by a copycat trail at Huntley, Bourne & Stevens that raised 25s 8d and £551 from street collections and a donation of 1,000 guineas from Huntley & Palmers. Throughout the proceedings, the money was carefully watched by Boy Scouts, wounded soldiers and lady helpers.

One gentleman offered £1,000 before the event had even begun. The target was to raise £5,000 in Reading, about £1,500 in Newbury, £1,500 in Basingstoke, £800 in Abingdon, £500 in Wantage and £450 in Hungerford.

To help coax the money out of the cash-strapped population, the organisers explained what the YMCA did



Probably the most common flag-day pin is that of the Red Cross which comes in a range of styles. Judging by the size this is a late war flag to save paper.

READING and DISTRICT

Y.M.C.A. HUT WEEK

October 21st—27th.

President: The RT. WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR (F. A. Sarjeant, Esq., J.P.)

Hon Secretary: MARTIN H.F. SUTTON, Esq., J.P., Erlegh Park.

Hon Treasurer: JOHN SIMONDS, Esq., Barclays Bank, Reading.

OBJECT— To raise funds to carry on the great War work of the Red Triangle Huts in all the fields of war.

Voluntary Helpers for clerical work and leaders for various phases of the campaign needed.

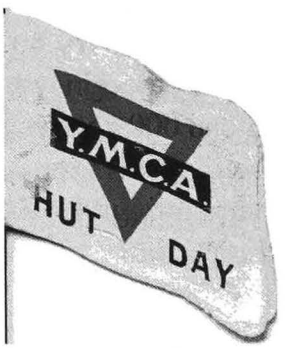
Please write Miss OAKESHOTT, Mr. R. A. MENS } Joint Secretaries, Y.M.C.A., Friar Street, Reading.

HELP NOW! TIME IS SHORT!

This is to be a big Town and District effort. Be in at the start. Correspondence invited from helpers in villages as well as in Reading Town.

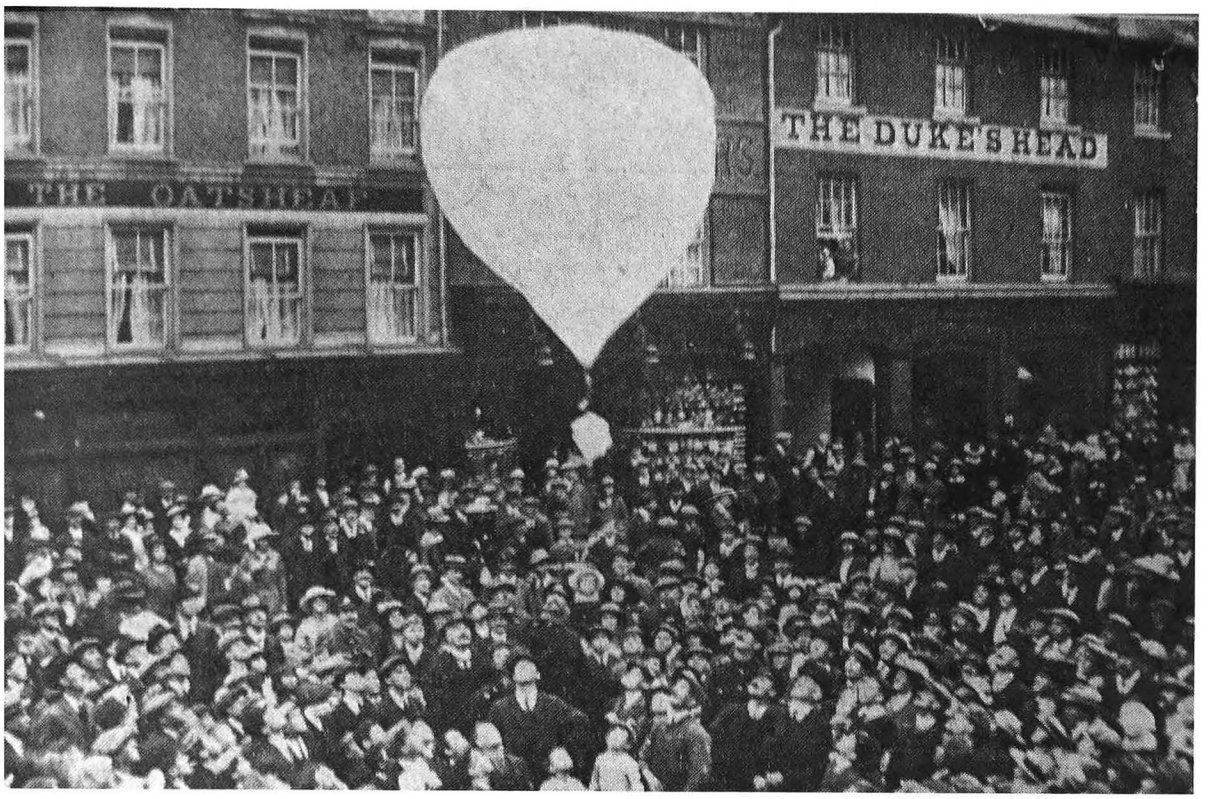
Registered under the War Charities Act, 1916.

Almost as frequently held as Red Cross Days, was the YMCA Hut Day, and just before the war ended there was a Hut Week.



and how much it cost. There were over 420 YMCA in France and Flanders, sixty in Egypt and Palestine, fifty-four in India, forty-two in Salonika, seventy-one in Mesopotamia, twenty in East Africa and twenty in Italy and the Mediterranean. To maintain this level of support for the forces cost £600 a day. Among the many things they did or provided were 26,000 cups of hot cocoa served free from one advanced dugout in a week, 25,000,000 pieces of stationery given out a week and 32,000 men and officers accommodated in city huts per week while on leave.

The police courts were busy during October dealing with drunks and an attack on a military policeman. Hilda Cook of 36 Surrey Road was fined £2 for obstructing Lance-Corporal Rundle of the Military



A propaganda balloon released to encourage the purchase of Victory Loans.

Police. He had been arresting an absentee when a large crowd assembled to watch the scuffle between the MP and his charge. During this, she pulled the whistle from his hand, ripped two buttons off his tunic and bit his left forefinger.

More serious crimes were tried at the Assizes in Reading. It opened on 15 October to hear the cases of James Brooker charged with burglary; John Hicks charged with burglary, house breaking and larceny, and Mabel Bedbrook, Cornelius Cox, Elsie Pott, Helen Robinson, Joseph Briggs and Alfred Nash who were all charged with bigamy. John Sinfield was charged with incest, Florence Lewis, Florence Simpson and her husband Joseph were charged with concealment of birth and Annie Smith was charged with the wilful murder of her new-born child. In this last case the judge decided that there was no proof that the infant had been alive when a rag had been tied tightly around the baby's neck. Although the baby had been alive for thirty minutes, it was judged that it had not had a separate existence, so could not be murdered. Smith was given twelve months for concealment.

Sex once again appeared in the news. Joseph Duvivier, a foreign national, of 91 Oxford Road, was committed for trial at the next

Assizes. He was charged with a serious offence in relation to a young girl under sixteen years of age, who was in his employ as a general servant.

At the same time the crime report for the quarter ended 30 June showed that crime was still falling, as compared with the previous quarter. Indictable offences were down by four and non-indictable down by 139. However, six juveniles had been whipped, and two sent to reformatory school.

October brought a constellation of stars never known in such conjunction before in Reading. There was a first class variety show, in aid of the RAF PoW Fund, and was in response to reports that RAF PoWs were being badly treated in Germany. Any money raised by RAF units, schools and performances was to purchase necessities to send to Germany. Among the artistes were Harry Tate and Co., Cicely Courtneidge and Co., Frederick Ross, Alec Fraser, Tom Stewart, Tom Howell, The Versatile Four, Marjory Montefiore, Poppy Lake, Cicely Debenham from the London Hippodrome and Jack Buchanan from the Comedy Theatre.

The London company of H. Stuart & Co., moleskin specialists, gave advice to readers of the *Chronicle* on how to make extra money. In such expensive times, they wrote, it behoved everyone to supplement their income in any possible legitimate way. Their idea was simple: trap moles and sell their skins. Readers were told that before the war, winter moleskins were 3d each but in 1917 they cost between 10½d and 1s. A milk carrier had made £260 from their sale. What did the catcher have to do? Just air dry them and then sell them. Rabbit, hare, fox, otter, badger and other skins could be sold as well as feathers and horsehair.

Topical stories about important members of the community were always of interest, especially when it was about the front. Following the German retreat in 1917, Captain J. Brain and Second Lieutenants S. Brain and Whitaker came upon a burning château. The three had been at Leighton Park so they named the château Leighton Park and put up a board with the name on. The château was later lost in the German advance. During the 1918 British advance, Captain F. Brain, Lieutenant Brain's brother, marched into the village and found the sign still there. Just three weeks later, Captain F. Brain was killed instantly by a shell.

Some of the committee of the Reading Branch of the National Federation of the Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers, with the steward and stewardess. The veteran is Corporal William Harper, late 4th Rifle Brigade, aged 89, who served in the following: Charge of the Light Brigade, Afghan Frontier Raid and the North and West Frontier, India.

Benevolent employers were doing their best to find jobs for those who had returned early from the war, for whatever reason. As business was booming for many local firms, there were still jobs to be had. On the Caversham Road, Goblin Toys had more orders than it could deal with and was thus able to employ many discharged men. Most of them worked in the new factory but some, with more severe wounds, worked from home after instruction.

The influenza pandemic continued throughout the year but the illness had been around in one form or another for some time. An advert in late 1916 made reference to influenza and how taking Jardox – a dried food in a cube shape – would help strengthen the body against it. Ten months into the year, the feature writer QT gave readers some advice: 'Reading is suffering, though happily not to the extent of some other towns, from the ravages of influenza.' The advice was simply to limit the spread by following the precautions in the government pamphlet (probably available from Boots). The suggestions are

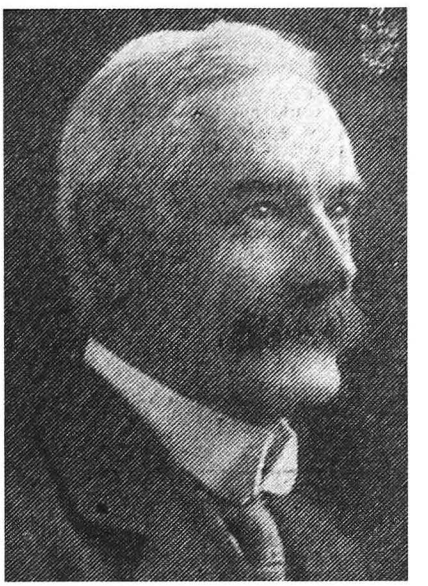
basically common-sense: 1 – constantly flush bedrooms and living rooms with fresh air; 2 – avoid overcrowded rooms and places of amusement; 3 – don't sleep in a room with an infected person; 4 – wet cleanse infected areas; 5 – indiscriminate spitting spreads diseases; 6 – mental-strain, over-fatigue and alcoholism should be avoided; 7 – regard all catarrhal attacks, and every illness with a rise in temperature as infectious and adopt appropriate measures at once.

Reading was in the grip of flu and numerous cases, some fatal, occurred in the borough. Schools were particularly badly hit. There were so many cases it was decided to close all schools from 23 October. In one school alone seven staff were ill. A week later the town had been spared the worst but there were still numerous new cases. Secondary and Sunday Schools closed, places of amusement were placed out of bounds and there were queues outside doctors' surgeries. 'A queue at Dr Fosbery's surgery in Oxford Road, which extended round the corner of Kensington Road...must have been at least 70 yards.' Public services were not seriously curtailed, but many of the larger businesses, short of staff, had to amalgamate departments to get their work done. Fortunately there was no incidence of wholesale death in a family.

Influenza was a rapid killer, as illustrated by the death of Charles Ing, aged twenty-three, and the death of his fiancée Daisy Perks, aged twenty-two. He had served, and been gassed, leaving him with weak lungs, easy prey for the virus. He died in London on Sunday, 27 October. The next day his mother and fiancée returned to Bracknell and on Tuesday Daisy went into Reading to buy mourning clothes. On returning home she was taken ill and died before 8 o'clock on Wednesday morning at her lover's house. They were buried in the same grave after a joint funeral in Easthampstead Church.

On page eleven of the *Chronicle* of 8 November was a small item of news that must have confused many readers: 'Armistice signed by Germany.' This report had come from Reuters, quoting official American sources: 'The Armistice with Germany was signed at 2.30 today.' At noon on the East Coast of America, 'the president of United Press fired off a cable to New York: GERMANY GIVES UP, WAR ENDS AT 2 P.M. Euphoria quickly erupted. Courts were closed, as church bells and sirens rang out. An anti-aircraft gun, stationed on the roof of 120 Broadway, marked the occasion by firing blank shells. The

NYSE stopped at 2 p.m.' Nothing happened in Reading, the media report was incorrect. The Germans were simply crossing to meet with Allied commanders. The war still had four days to run.



The fourth and final war-time mayor, Alderman Stanley Howard.

Reading, in common with the rest of the country, spent a week of rejoicing consequent on the signing of the Armistice. The first intimation that the Armistice was signed was the blowing of the GWR hooter at 11 o'clock, followed in quick response by the other hooters in the neighbourhood. There was no mistaking the meaning of the welcome sound, and soon people were pouring out of offices and shops on the way to Market Place to await the official announcement at the *Reading Mercury*. The hoisting of Messrs Sutton's flag was the confirmation of the good tidings, and the delight displayed by all the inhabitants showed how great was the relief that the four years of terrible strain was over.

At G.R. Jackson Ltd, of Oxford Road, the news arrived at 10.57 and three minutes later all the employees streamed out of the yard,

Armistice Day celebrations in the town centre.

happy in the news and because they had been given a paid half-day holiday. Civil Service offices in London Road closed as soon as the news came through.

Tools were downed at the GWR Ironworks as soon as the first hooter sounded. A foreman said: 'There was no such thing as holding the men. Their pleasure at the news made them feel that they must be out in the open to give proper vent to their feelings, and they were soon out in the open.' Other engineering companies followed suit, with a half-day paid holiday. Messrs Allen & Simmonds of De Montfort Road went one better. They closed midday for a paid half-day, returned to work on the Tuesday for the morning and were paid for the free afternoon, and were then allowed to take Wednesday as an unpaid holiday.

Going one further, 'as a tribute to the loyalty of their staff during four years of trying work, Messrs McIlroy gave the whole of their employees at Reading and elsewhere, including the housekeeping staff, an extra week's salary.'

Soon after 11.30 am, the mayor and deputy mayor, accompanied by Councillor Winter, Mr John Simonds and the town clerk proceeded to Queen Victoria's statue where a large and enthusiastic crowd had assembled. Three cheers were given for peace, followed by the singing of the National Anthem. From nowhere, flags and bunting magically appeared to decorate business premises, private houses and tradesmen's carts. A string of flags appeared across Broad Street and discordant musical instruments soon appeared in the streets. It was the exception for a person to not carry a flag. Mr T. Blake of East Street flew the German flag at half-mast and an effigy of the Kaiser appeared: 'The German madman run amok.'

'Men and women were seen to weep with joy.' Outside the War Hospitals nurses and wounded Tommies linked arms and danced in the streets and special meals and concerts were speedily arranged to celebrate the news.

In Flint Street, a gang of German prisoners were engaged in brick loading and hauling. When they received the news, they cheered as frantically as the guard in charge of them.

Wounded soldiers were not allowed to buy alcohol but, as it was a celebration one group decided to try it anyway. In Messrs H & G Simonds brewery yard a party of soldiers tried to buy a barrel of beer

but were refused. The soldiers went straight over to the premises opposite, and acting on the principle of 'French leave' took two small casks of beer which they rolled to an adjoining lane. They forced the bungs and poured the beer into a bucket. It was handed round to 'the many customers who suddenly made their appearance'. It did not last long.

Impromptu processions were speedily organised with civilians, officers and soldiers marching together. The mayor gave a speech and then accompanied the celebrating crowds, as we would say today, but which were called demonstrators in 1918, as they marched around the town, headed by the band of the Royal Berks depot. One officer wore an Uhlan helmet and other trophies soon appeared. Heavy rain did not dampen spirits and the stopping of the trams at 4.00 pm gave the streets to the public.

A major complaint since 1915 had been the level of lighting in the town. Now things could change. The Chief Constable received instructions that street lamp masking could be removed and the number of lights in use could be increased by half. Lamps in the town centre were quickly cleaned and lit. The effect was immediately apparent as shops and houses removed their shading to increase the light.

Any shop with fireworks was besieged and when dark settled hundreds were let off in a very crowded Broad Street. There was no disorder, allowing the police to 'take an amused interest' in the proceedings. Comparisons were made 'between the harmlessness of the exuberance on Armistice Night with the wildness of the Mafeking manifestations'.

Across the river in Caversham, the bells were rung in the early afternoon and again in the evening. Flags and bunting were quickly displayed and numerous fireworks were discharged from gardens.

Communication between town and countryside was rarely rapid. To make sure that the neighbouring villages knew of the Armistice, Heelas sent a motor delivery wagon, bedecked with Union Jacks and bunting, to spread the news.

Few returned to work in the afternoon at Huntley, Bourne and Stevens, but at Huntley and Palmers work continued because the firm impressed upon their employees the sorrow as well as the gladness which such an occasion brought to the bereaved. However, many of the female workers stopped at 1 o'clock.

Not all the news was good. Families continued to be notified of the death of their son or husband. Private E. Francis died of pneumonia following flu on 10 November. His parents at Fir Croft, Southcote Road would have received notification while everyone was celebrating. His was one of many deaths that would be reported over the coming months. Mrs E.L. Davies had no reason to rejoice. As the bells were ringing she was burying her husband. Evan Lloyd Davies MM, a thirty-five-year-old schoolteacher at the Wokingham Road Senior School had been wounded, recovered, and wounded again. This second wound was a severe head wound that left him convalescing for two years. He died as a result of an operation on his head.

The writer QT cautioned people not to forget those who were grieving: 'In the hour of our triumph let us not for one moment forget the heroic dead, the gallant men to whose imperishable renown we owe the defeat of our deadly foes and the safety of civilisation...the dead and the thousands of maimed have saved England and civilisation. The thoughts of all will at this time specially gather in sympathy with those whose losses have been almost too grievous to bear. If one recalls some of the tragedies of the war, it is only that we should realise the more distinctly how terrible have been the burdens which some families have had to bear...Mr Leonard Sutton lost four sons, Colonel W. Maurice three sons, so has the rector of Bramley. The tragic series of calamities which fell on the Loder-Symonds family. Not only did four sons lose their lives but a married daughter was drowned in the *Galway Castle*; Mrs Loder-Symonds and another daughter died. There are hundreds and thousands of men belonging to the district associated with the Royal Berkshire Regiment or with other units whom we would desire to honour at this time, men of great promise, whose lives would have been fruitful, of great advantage to the community, men like Poulton Palmer, Giles Ayres, and those who bore honoured names such as Bartholomew, Fleet, Colebrook, Mount, Guilding, Collier, Henman and innumerable others. Our thoughts go out with the bereaved ones in deepest sympathy.'

Who believes in miracles? One family certainly had reason to on 5 December. One of the families QT had cautioned people not to forget were Mr and Mrs George of The Gables, St George's Road. They had received notification of their son Walter's death on 19 October. This

had been confirmed by a letter from the Paymaster and a further letter from the Graves Director giving his grave number in France. On the same day as the information about his grave arrived, so did a letter written by him. It was not a delayed letter written just before his death, telling them he was 'in the pink', as some families had received, but one written after his supposed death, telling them he was wounded in the thigh and safe in a PoW camp in Germany. Shortly after his letter arrived he was repatriated.

Almost immediately thoughts turned to the repatriation of prisoners of war. To allay the concerns of those waiting for the return of a loved one or friend, Hilda Mount of Wasing Place, the Hon. Sec. of the 1st, 2nd, 5th and 8th battalions of the Royal Berks PoW Care Committee, wrote to the papers to allay their anxieties. She informed them that they would arrive at Dover or Hull and proceed to a camp where they could be processed. 'On arrival the men will dispatch postcards to their relatives, and, after they have been paid, had their statements taken, etc. are given two months' leave to their homes. They will remain about two days in the rest camps. Sick men do not go to the rest camps...It is impossible at present to ascertain at what port or on what date any specific prisoner will arrive, and relatives are advised not to proceed to either port in the hope of meeting prisoners.' Relatives would be advised of any information as soon as it was received.

Now the war was over, the next general election could take place. Changes in voting rights and boundary re-organisation made it more unpredictable than previous elections. Vote counting would be slower than usual due to the larger numbers now entitled to vote. Reading's new electoral register contained 45,379 names, compared to 11,200 in the old register, one of the biggest increases in the country. It also brought portions of Caversham, Tilehurst, Whitley and Earley, which were in the borough for municipal purposes, into Reading for parliamentary voting. The new franchise gave the vote to 18,305 women over thirty. Of the male votes, 11,511 were absent voters, men in the forces.

Electoral ward	No. of males	No. of females	Absent voters
Abbey	1149	775	421
Battle 1	667	430	267
Battle 2	2501	1570	1069
Castle	1566	1126	649
Caversham east	1682	1119	744
Caversham west	1241	909	437
Church	2358	1575	972
East 1	1955	1305	884
East 2	1777	1320	741
Katesgrove 1	1220	790	565
Katesgrove 2	1447	928	693
Minster	1266	814	575
Redlands	1695	1274	670
Tilehurst 1	1589	1075	736
Tilehurst 2	761	519	297
Victoria	1977	1195	890
West 1	356	270	128
West 2	1867	1311	773
Total	27074	18305	11511

We do not have a name or any particulars of the 'intelligent elector' who predicted the result:

Candidate & party	Forecast vote	Actual vote
Wilson Con U	15,000	15,204
Morris Lab	9,000	8,410
Thoresby L	5,000	3,143
Quelch Pro Ally Lab	1,000	1,462
Spoilt papers	-	62
		Con majority 6,794

This change in the number of voters had been brought about by the Representation of the People Act. On 15 April millions of men and women – some 6,000,000 of the latter – became entitled to the parliamentary vote who previously did not enjoy that privilege.

Households were given a pink form on 13 April to be collected three days later. Men over twenty-one, women over thirty and men over nineteen in the forces could vote as long they had six months residency.

Few men were demobilised immediately, most waited patiently in winter quarters. To combat boredom the YMCA launched an appeal for books for the camp libraries. The appeal was opened in the Hut Week office at 96 Broad Street and asked the residents of Reading to give every book, magazine, game, music sheet and musical instrument they could spare. The immediate need was for 1,000 books and magazines.

Fighting had ceased, but the casualty lists kept appearing. Photos of those killed, such as the three Chamberlain brothers, one in 1914 and two in 1918, death notices and obituaries continued to appear in the newspapers for many months after the Armistice. Some were war deaths, others victims of influenza: eighteen-year-old Private Alfred Allen, of 56 Filey Road, killed in action on 30 October with 8 Royal Berks, the youngest of seven sons serving. Thirty-year-old Frank Fisher, fifth son of George and Ellen, of 65 Cholmeley Street, was killed in action on 23 October. Twenty-one-year-old Second Lieutenant Maurice Pitot, RE attached RAF, died of wounds at a casualty clearing station on 8 October. He was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs Maurice Pitot of 'The Hey', Wokingham. Able Seaman George Austin, of 20 Frances Street, died on 10 November of wounds received on 9 November when HMS *Britannia* was torpedoed and sunk off Cape Trafalgar.

Some faced the realisation that a loved one reported missing would not be returning. The Roll of Honour for 20 December contained one such heartbreak: 'Previously reported missing now known to have been killed on 13 April, Captain Thomas Pryce, VC, MC of the Grenadier Guards. Dearly loved husband of Margaret of Crauford Lodge, Maidenhead.'

A considerable number of deaths were from disease. Frank Hickman, twenty-seven-year-old son of Frank and Ellen, of 8 Montague Street, died in Norwich War Hospital of pneumonia. Private A. Champ, forty-two-year-old husband of Gertrude, of 51 Palmer Park Avenue, died on 28 October at 41 Stationary Hospital in France of bronchopneumonia. Harry Haydon, beloved husband of Emily of 9

Although the War Office had informed next of kin that missing men were almost certainly dead many families wanted information as to how and where they had died. Some clinging on in hope that it was a mistake.

As the men returned, Mr and Mrs Reynolds of 12 Mount Pleasant, Wokingham, wanted information about their son, Private O. G. Reynolds, reported wounded and missing and believed killed. He is not listed in the CWGC lists so perhaps he did return home.

Salisbury Road, died of double pneumonia on 12 November at the RAF hospital at Tarrant Monkton. Another RAF death was an eldest son, Second Lieutenant Martin Child, of Connaught Rise. He had been an air gunner in Italy where he caught malaria and, unfit to fly, had been invalided home. Newly-commissioned as an armaments officer, the twenty-one-year-old had caught pneumonia and died at the Cottage Hospital in Uxbridge.

The flu epidemic and the ensuing diseases it caused hit civilians in Reading, Herbert Withnall of Parkside, Woodley, dying of pneumonia on 10 November. Influenza was a pandemic affecting people who had emigrated far from Reading. George Smart of 34 Queens Road, Caversham, received sad news just before Christmas that his daughter in Ontario had died at the age of twenty-six leaving a week-old baby and two other small children. She had died of pneumonia following flu.

Some people did still just die, like Clara Tyrell of Whitley who died on 12 November aged 100. The Hon. Alfred Erskine Gathorne-Hardy died by his own hand on 11 November at Donnington Priory aged seventy-three. He had shot himself as a result of an unfavourable report on his health.

Influenza proved more costly than war to the insurance companies. The industrial branch of the Prudential Assurance Company paid more than twice as much during the eight week epidemic, on account of deaths from influenza as it paid in the same period on war claims.

Type of claim	Cost in Pounds
Influenza	620,000
War	279,000

At the height of the epidemic, the industrial branch paid £99,045 in one week on account of influenza deaths. Many of the war claims were attributed to influenza, as military deaths were entered as war claims whether due to fighting or sickness. The heaviest claims were in the weeks ending 16 November and 30 November.

Not all the announcements in the papers were about death. The first birth publicly notified was a son to Lieutenant MacKae-Gibson (Tank Corps) and his wife, of 26 Bulmershe Road, on 26 November. The first wedding to appear in the papers was that of Elsie Rider of 133 Liverpool Road to William King of Aldershot who was serving in the RAF at the time.

There had been strikes before and during the war and there would be strikes after it. The first was on 27 November at Reading Gas Works where the men walked out and refused to work with an employee who would not join the union. It was short-lived, lasting only from 10 am till 5 pm, and caused no disruption to gas supplies. Although unofficial it succeeded, as the man was persuaded to become a member.

The workers at the biscuit factory had no reason to strike. Their employers had proposed two positive changes to their working lives, better hours and pay. The minimum wage for males was set at 18s a week for a forty-eight hour week at age fourteen. It rose in six-monthly increments until the age of eighteen. The weekly rates were 14½ – 19s; 15 – 21s; 15½ – 25s; 16 – 27s; 16½ – 33s; 17 – 37s; 17½ – 41s; 18 – 45s. For girls engaged in the manufacturing department, wages rose from 17s at 14 to 30s at 21 and, for those engaged in packing, 15s at 14 to 30s at 21. Naturally 'the proposed scales were received with acclamation at a meeting of factory members of the Reading Branch of the National Union of General Workers. A cordial vote of thanks was passed to the firm and union officials.'

The last Christmas of the war at St Luke's convalescent hospital.

Another group of workers to receive a wage award were tramway employees. This gave over-eighteens 5s extra a week and under-eighteens 2s 6d and tradesmen in the building trade had recently been given a 12½ per cent increase. The public were informed that this would result in higher fares or shorter distances for 1d journeys. A workman's fare was to rise uniformly to 2d at times when available. There were to be no trams on Christmas Day though all employees were to be paid for the day. It was noted that there might be difficulties in the future as tram receipts had fallen, and so there would be no extra money available from fares.

While some received pay rises, those in the army did not. A shortage of money led a previously respectable Music Hall artiste into a brief life of crime to make ends meet. At the Borough Bench, Maud Maddocks, lodging at 64 Watlington Street, was convicted of stealing a gents' overcoat, valued at 30s, and further stealing a cardboard box containing three blouses valued at £7. 7s and a mackintosh and hat valued at £4. She claimed that her health and general demeanour had been gravely affected by her experiences in the London air raids, on one occasion being left unconscious by a bomb that fell close to her. She was in Reading because her husband, an army officer, was there on a course. Short of money, in a moment of temptation she took the

coat, followed by other articles. All the money she raised from their sale went on household expenses. Her sentence for the first offence was one month and two months for the other charges, both to run consecutively.

Following Huntley & Palmers' lead, other companies reduced the working week. Serpell's, the biscuit manufacturer in South Street, and Huntley, Bourne & Stevens, the tin makers, notified their employees of the introduction of the forty-eight hour week commencing from the New Year. The latter were already working a forty-nine hour week so for them it was a minor change.

Neither company matched the changes at the biscuit factory, due to start immediately after Christmas. Work, at the new rates, would recommence at 8 am on 27 December with 1¼ hours off for dinner and finishing at 6 pm, (12.15 on Saturdays). All employees would receive a week's paid holiday in the summer. Office workers would also finish at 6 pm and receive a bonus – tea and biscuits at 4.15 each afternoon.

With talk of demobilisation and repatriation, a photo and a letter in the *Chronicle* further emphasised that the war was over. The first was a photo of two captured German field guns placed in Market Place, the second was a lengthy description of the arrival of the German Fleet by a resident serving in the Royal Navy. James Lloyd, serving on a ship in the 2nd Battle Squadron, witnessed the surrender of the German Fleet. He watched the Grand Fleet steam in single line to meet their erstwhile enemy, everyone at action stations and wearing gas masks in case of German treachery. He felt the frustration of having been unable to fight them and now having to shepherd them to Scapa Flow.

Shortages did not suddenly cease with the Armistice. In December there was a warning from the coal controller of a continued insufficiency of coal. It was essential not to relax the effort to save coal because supply was still uncertain and needed by other countries too. The public were requested to continue, in the national interest, exercising the 'utmost economy in the burning of fuel and light at the present time as they so loyally did under a condition of war'.

News of meat supplies was better. With all ships arriving safely, there was an increase in meat availability. A ration coupon could now buy 5d instead of 4d of meat. Although beef was to remain rationed until British produce was available in sufficient quantity, from 29 December other meats came off the ration. Customers would be

allowed to buy as much pork, poultry, game, hares and rabbits, horse flesh and all kinds of canned, potted, and preserved meat and sausages as they wished. A further loosening of the regulations meant that the customer needed no coupons to buy suet, loose fat, edible offal, imported tender loins and stripped bones freely from any butcher, not only their registered one.

On 18 December, the Reading School magazine reported 418 ORs who had served in all branches of the forces, of whom 77 had either died in action or as a result of wounds received. This latter figure had to be amended and the War Memorial in the school chapel lists 82. This figure should be 84 as two ORs are not commemorated: 2nd Lt Cyril Major and Private Harold Louth. This is an example of how reported facts are not always accurate. Previously, on 23 November, the *Reading Standard* noted that Reading School had every reason to be proud of its Roll of Honour, containing as it did the names of 425 men who had served of whom seventy-four had made the supreme sacrifice, and fifty-four who had been wounded. Many had been decorated: two, Lieutenant Colonel Collard and Brigadier General Tulloch had been appointed Companions of the Order of the Bath; Major Lyddon received the Cross of St Michael and St George, nine won the DSO, thirty the MC, one the DCM, and two the MM. ORs were awarded three MCs and bar, two French Military Medals, one Legion d'Honneur, one Croix de Guerre with silver star; eleven were MiD and one was MiD twice. Two had been promoted to Brigadier: C.F. Templer and J.A.S. Tulloch. One former pupil, Gunner Devos, was serving in the Belgian army.

The PoWs gradually returned to Reading. Many, but no means all, were willing to share their experiences to let people know what they had undergone, but most simply took up their lives again. It is interesting to note the contrast between the experiences of two soldiers whose stories appeared in 6 December issue of the *Chronicle*, one an officer, the other a private.

Lieutenant Norman Langston of 8 Royal Berks was captured on 21 March near St. Quentin. He was given no food for thirty-six hours and survived on two plates of thin soup and 1/5 a loaf of bread a day for the two months he spent at Rastatt. Conditions improved at his next camp, Hesepe near Osnabrück, where he received relief parcels from the Berkshire PoW committee. His final camp was near Cologne where PoWs were allowed into the city to visit the cafés. The people were

FIGHTING FAMILIES.

Striking Response to a "Daily News" Offer.

Which of our British families has given the largest number of its members to the fighting forces in the war against Germany? "The Daily News" is offering a gift of £250 to the family which can prove its claim to this honourable distinction. The extent to which all the male members of big families have been in the fighting line has been little realised, and it is anticipated that the present enquiry will bring to light records even more impressive than those which have been given already in "The Daily News."

The method of awarding the gift may be varied according to circumstances, but its value in any case is £250. The fighting forces are the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, and to these must be added the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Those who submit records should address their envelopes to

"War Records,"
"Daily News,"
Bouverie Street,
London, E.C.4.

The particulars submitted should be as complete and concise as possible, and the various degrees of direct descent from the head of the family (who must have been living on August 4, 1914) should be made clear. The record of the family to which the award is made must be fully authenticated, and if any question arises the decision of the Editor of "The Daily News" must be accepted as final. Particulars of the progress of the scheme are appearing in "The Daily News" day by day.

The fighting families' competition. Who won?

friendly and invited them into their homes. When the Armistice was signed, he walked out of the camp, got on a boat and went down the Rhine to Holland.

In contrast, Private Charles Moss of the Royal Fusiliers, who was captured on the same day, received not a single parcel and for the whole of his captivity was kept on a starvation diet which resulted in severe physical wasting. At first he was made to work behind enemy lines near St Quentin and then he was moved to the Alsace-Lorraine border. At the Armistice he was taken to within eighteen miles of the border and told to make his own way home. He eventually reached French and American lines where his group were welcomed and fed.

Returning soldiers needed jobs. One company that provided them was the Goblin Toy Company but, after a great fire which destroyed the factory and much of its warehouse, and Christmas stock, it was in no position to offer employment. Before the Fire Brigade arrived, the fire had spread to Harrison's Chemical Works next door and to the motor garage. The motor vehicles were saved, albeit in a damaged state, but there was little left of the packing room and machine room when the fire was finally brought under control.

Five weeks after the fighting had ceased, the 20 December papers carried another casualty list, and the weekly list would continue for several further issues. Listed were Royal Berks' and other regiments' casualties with their place of residence in Berkshire: 11 killed, 57 wounded, 66 released PoWs, 2 missing, 4 died of wounds and 14 died of other causes. Reading bore the brunt of these: 2 killed, 2 died of wounds, 8 died of other causes, 2 missing, 23 were returned PoWs and 32 wounded.

During 1916 the council had made plans to buy land in Southampton Street to provide affordable housing for the working class. With the fighting over, the Town Planning Committee recommended to the council that the Local Government Board be informed that the corporation was prepared to provide 500 such dwellings. The land to be used for this development was Ayres Farm on the east side of the Basingstoke Road and opposite the corporation property at Manor Farm. The land was well-drained and only ten minutes' walk from a tram terminus and on a bus route.

The site layout would allow the houses to be grouped, not built in rows as on the other sites. Fifty acres was to be bought at £220 an acre, giving each house a frontage of twenty-four feet and a depth of 150

feet, twelve to an acre. Additional council land at Manor Farm and Rose Kiln Lane would be needed to provide the 500 homes. Three acres would be allocated for a playing field and a state nursery school would be built.

A range of houses would be available to suit different family sizes. On the ground floor, two out of three would have a parlour, living room and a kitchen. The remainder would have a living room and a kitchen scullery. Ten houses would have a shop front, seventy would have four bedrooms, four hundred would have three bedrooms, and thirty would have two bedrooms. Every house would contain a bath.

Reading Industrial Cooperative Society was also looking to the future. At a meeting, it decided to buy Grove Estate in Caversham for £16,500 cash – 30s per member. It wanted to expand its business as a dairy farmer, provide allotments for members, turn some of the land into building plots and use the remainder for agricultural and horticultural produce.

Companies began to look at their record of service and achievement during the war. The first to let the community know of their pride was Suttons Seeds. The Royal Seed Factory was proud of the 241

Suttons Seeds donated vegetable seeds to troops stationed abroad so they could supplement their rations with fresh food in season. This shows the efforts of the men of the RGA Base Depot in France who had supplied local troops with twenty-two tons, not including potatoes, of vegetables.

employees who had served, of whom twelve had been commissioned and three of them killed. Of the remaining 229 who had served in the ranks, seventeen had been killed and one was still officially listed as missing. In total five had received recognition for their services: Captain R. Haigh, MC, Sergeant W.J. Kelly, MM & bar, Sergeant W.H. Sumpter, MM, Lance-Corporal A.J. Beckett, MM while Lance-Corporal A.G. Withers was Mentioned in Despatches (MiD).

Sport had been very much restricted by the war but whippet racing had continued throughout in Reading. Once again the Central Whippet Club Christmas race meeting would be held on Boxing Day, this time in Caversham with a 10.30 am start. The Caversham sports meeting for horse, foot and whippets, scheduled for Christmas Day, was postponed until 27 December at 11.30 am.

In contrast with 1917, the Post Office reported a phenomenally busy time. They reported being under extra pressure; without the use of the Queen's Head, they were short of space. The introduction of the 'postal packet' caused further problems because it required the same handling as a standard parcel. Paying the double military allowance to cover the Christmas period also increased the pressure on an already-stretched service.

The last war-time Christmas would necessarily be touched with pathos, but most people wanted it to be one to remember. This was even true for the poor of Reading who were the responsibility of the Reading Board of Guardians. 'No Board of Guardians in the country look after the poor people in their charge better than the Reading Board,' opined the *Chronicle*. The Christmas dinner provided by them 'was one which was not bettered in hundreds and thousands of homes. In the morning tobacco was served out to the men, and oranges and sweets to the women…Christmas dinner consisted of pork, four fine pigs, bred on the Guardians' farms being killed, roast beef and leg of mutton, with a substantial helping of Christmas pudding, beer and minerals.' Local residents provided them with gifts of toys, fruit and sweets.

Under the heading 'Gay shops', readers found out what they already knew – the town's traders had enjoyed a very profitable Christmas. Reading traders reported an exceptionally busy time. Money was plentiful and was 'liberally expended'. Business was abnormally good everywhere. Heelas broke all records, while McIlroy's department store

experienced unusually high demand in all departments, especially in toys where demand outstripped supply.

Not everything was available in the quantities required. There was a shortage of wine caused by a lack of bottling staff. Eighteen's, Fishmongers in West Street, reported that trade was especially good but that there was a shortage of cod, hake and bloaters, and the same shortage of labour meant a shortage of dried haddock. While the supply of other provisions was better than expected there was a general shortage, especially of dried fruit.

An unusual request appeared in the papers near Christmas. Not this time for money, but for pianos. They were wanted by the War Hospitals. Twenty of them were needed for the Christmas festivities through to 30 December. The military authorities would fetch and return any they could borrow; they promised to take every care of them.

In all the Reading War Hospitals, the King's Message to the Wounded was read out on Christmas Day: 'Another Christmas has come round, and we are no longer fighting. God has blessed our efforts, and the Queen and I offer you our hearty good wishes for a happy Christmas, and many bright years to come. To the disabled, sick, and wounded we send a special greeting, hoping that with returning health you may be comforted by the vision of those good days of peace for which you have sacrificed so much.'

Knowing that it was probably to be the last war Christmas, and despite the limitations of supplies, all decided to make it excel. This was made easier because many men were on home leave. All were provided with 'substantial fare' and many received gifts. The Katesgrove meal was typical: chicken, pork, plum pudding, custard, followed by nuts, oranges and bonbons. At St Luke's everyone received a matchbox inscribed 'In memory of your victory'. At the RBH the soldiers' ward was decorated with miniature flags and festoons and white flowers, and each man received as a Christmas present a shirt and a pair of socks. For dinner they had turkey. In the equally carefully-decorated civilian wards, patients were given a choice of beef or chicken.

Entertainment was not neglected. Concerts were held, Whist was played, carols were sung and, at Katesgrove, the artistes from the Palace Theatre entertained the men on Boxing Day. A further treat for

Christmas entertainment at Cliff House in Caversham for the wounded.

700 wounded was a performance of *Jack and the Beanstalk* at the Royal County Theatre.

As the New Year approached, it was time for the authorities to look back and report their activities over the last year or quarter. The first to report was the Water Works Department: between 1 December 1917 and 30 November 1918 26.48 inches of rain had fallen compared with 27.97 in the previous year. The heaviest in both years was in July (1917 at 5.21 inches and 5.23 in 1918) while the driest had been October 1917 with 0.56 inches and June 1918 with 0.60 inches. In a year of rising costs and a shortage of labour, they had managed a number of important changes but threatened higher prices as a result: a main had been laid out to Grove Farm to replace the shallow well, and disused cabling had been taken from the tram ways to provide electric lighting in the Fobney Water Works. The biggest single venture had been the provision of 900 feet of water mains from the Tilehurst Water Company to 1,2,3,4 and 5 Armour Cottages, 1,2,3 and 4 Swansea Terrace, Lower Armour Road, 1,2,3 and 4 Kew Terrace, Kentwood Hill, 1,2,4,6,8 and 10 Downing Road and two cottages on the west side of Swansea Terrace.

Reading's libraries boasted of 185,057 books borrowed, not the

highest for the war, with a daily rate of 700 volumes. There were 8,383 borrowers with the Central library being the busiest with 134,000 loans. Schools borrowed 47,236 books and the reference library issued 32,163 volumes.

There was much to look forward to in the New Year, the return of loved ones being foremost for most families. Rationing would end and sporting fixtures would restart. All the well-known racing meetings would take place in 1919, giving a list of fixtures providing 280 days of racing, the same as in 1914.

Residents were told that coupons would be used for some months yet and that a new book would appear in March. However, the overall view was considerably more rosy than a month before. While home-produced beef and butter would continue to be scarce until spring, the outlook for margarine, sugar and jam was much better. For every family member, shoppers could look forward to an extra ounce of margarine a week in January. At the end of January the sugar ration would be increased to ¾ pound a week and, during the second week of the New Year, it was expected that more jam would be available and that it might even come off the ration. If that did happen, then margarine, sugar and butter would follow as conditions improved. And, of course, there were the January sales to look forward to.

Despite much positive news, the printing of yet another casualty list just five days before the New Year must have dampened many spirits. It listed sixteen killed, seven died of wounds, twelve died of other causes, two missing believed drowned, seventy-eight wounded, one missing, and one wounded and missing. Of these forty-seven were Reading men. The bright part of the list contained the names of thirty returned PoWs, seven of whom were from Reading. The continuing appearance of casualty lists would for many make the newly-won peace hollow.

CHAPTER 3

1919
The Homecoming

What did Reading have to look forward to? There was the return of PoWs, the demobilisation of the forces, freely available food, the removal of rationing and the end of DORA, perhaps a return to normal life – but no matter how much it was desired, there would be no return to pre-war ways. So much had changed permanently and further change was on the way.

Not though the January sales. The war, rising prices and the American Civil War were used by McIlroy's to publicise the bargains to be had in their sale. Readers were informed that, though only one country had been involved in that war, there had been international repercussions on prices that continued to rise for two years after its end and a further three before they came back to normal. They were further told that governments had no reserve stocks and would continue to buy for reconstruction and demobilisation. The shop reminded customers that the constantly rising prices would make present prices look small very shortly, and asserted that it was fortunate that McIlroy's had bought stock months ago which they were happy to discount. Their sale, they said, would certainly be the greatest bargain opportunity of 1919. 'Be wise!! No maker will accept orders to-day at the prices in McIlroy's Sale.'

Simonds', the local brewers, submitted plans to the Licensing Authority to radically alter their hostelry in Friar Street, the Marquis of Lorne. They wanted to provide a type of house which offered food

and non-intoxicants as well as alcohol. They were responding to demands from the Temperance Movement.

There were many complaints about beer. Moans were about the poor quality, the lack of taste, the low alcohol level, the high level of duty, which was now at 70s a barrel as well as the limited quantity available. The only sensible solution was to increase production, raising a further £20,000,000 in revenue, and use it to reduce tax in other areas to stimulate growth. Needless to say, nothing happened that would alleviate the beer drinkers' problems.

Once again the Chief Constable was able to report an overall fall in crime. The report for the third quarter of 1918 compared to the same quarter in 1917 showed a decrease of six indictable offences (total sixty-four) with an increase of three non-indictable offences (total 377). Bigamy showed an increase of five cases but the number of cases concerning servicemen fell by eighty-two. There had been an increase in Highway Acts crime, malicious damage, byelaw infractions and fruit stealing offences. There were also three cases of murder waiting to go to trial.

No Coupons
for
Corned Beef
You can now add the Best Beef to your menu without using your Meat Coupons.
There is no waste about Corned Beef—no bone, no gristle; no fuel is needed to cook it; the quantity you buy is the quantity that comes to table.
We are offering the finest Beef at
1/10
per lb.
which is under Control Price.
Increase your meat ration and save your coupons for fresh meat.
International Stores
THE BIGGEST GROCERS IN THE WORLD.
I.S. 133

A change in rationing meant that more products were available without using valuable points.

At the annual Brewster Sessions for the borough, the chairman said that there had been only twenty-three cases of drunkenness in the last year against thirty-seven in 1917. It looked as if drunkenness would vanish from Reading altogether. Appearing in the papers the following week were four cases, two for theft and two for drunkenness. Henry Wiggins, of 55 Silver Street, was charged with being drunk in London Road and assaulting PC Birt. Wiggins had knocked the officer's helmet off when asked to go home quietly. Another PC went to Birt's assistance to be told by the defendant that he had been in the army 'for

the likes of him'. The Bench were informed that Birt had won the MM in France, the other officer had served the whole war on the North Sea with the navy and that Wiggins had been in the Labour Corps and not served abroad. He was fined 10s for being drunk and £4 10s for the assault.

The second case involved a Canadian soldier stationed at Bramshott. John Conroy was charged with being drunk in Cross Street where he had been found lying helplessly on the footpath. He explained he had just come back from France and was on his way to Bramshott and regretted his action. He was discharged with costs of 4s.

Three weeks later there were two further convictions for drunkenness. Julia Stevens of the Fair Ground was drunk in Bridge Street. She was fined 5s or three days. Her husband was asked if he would pay. He replied that he would pay and that he'd pay £5,000 if it was required – obviously a man in love or one in fear! Horace Cox of 19 Vastern Road was charged with being drunk whilst in charge of a motor car and assaulting the Chief Inspector of the NACB (Navy & Army Canteen Board). Claiming to be weak from hunger, he admitted the assault and apologised, but denied being drunk. He was fined £2 for the first offence and £1 for the second. His licence was endorsed.

For the first time in the war, race and skin colour were mentioned in separate trials. At the Berkshire Epiphany Quarter Sessions in Reading, Robert Stewart of Old Windsor, 'a man of colour, serving in the Canadian Forestry Corps was indicted for wounding Private Thompson, also a man of colour.' Thompson had cut up Stewart with a razor and been bound over while stationed in Essex. While travelling back together, Stewart had cut Thompson's throat with a razor but not seriously. His defence was that, in the part of America he came from, this was more accepted than in the UK. As he had been in prison since 17 October and had thus served a six-week sentence, he was bound over for the sum of £10.

In the same session Private Walter Mines of the 'Canadian Forestry Corps was indicted for burglariously entering the Nag's Head' at Oakley Green and stealing two glass barrels containing whisky and the sum of 5s. His commanding officer told the jury that the man was a 'full-blooded Indian' and in Canada there were strict laws to stop the sale of alcohol to them. 'Firewater' caused them to become

irresponsible. If the judge gave him a short sentence, he would make sure he returned to Canada straight after. As a result of this plea, he was given only thirty days.

Loss could now be freely expressed and commemorated. At Holy Trinity a large gathering watched the dedication of a war shrine. It was 'in proud and loving memory of members of the congregation' who had given their lives in the cause of righteousness and freedom in the Great War 1914-18.' Memorials were planned across Berkshire and people were prepared to give generously. The Peppard War Memorial Committee promised to raise £1,508 for theirs but thought that they could reach £1,700. A Calvary was constructed at St Saviour's in Coley, and many more memorials were built.

A major discussion concerned the Reading memorial, and whether it should commemorate Reading, the Royal Berkshire Regiment or Berkshire. A decision had to be made about its form. Ideas included beautifying Caversham Bridge, homes for soldiers, a memorial on the Berkshire Downs, a Union Jack club in Reading, clubs and institutes for soldiers, additional educational facilities, the erection of a new central library, an obelisk or similar memorial, the endowment of the Queen Victoria Nursing Institute or a victory sports ground.

By June the favoured option was a memorial on 'The Triangle', a plot at the Friar Street end of Caversham Road, comprising an unclimbable iron fence, an ornamental public garden with seating, paths, and playground, with a central monument on a pedestal, surmounted by a war trophy, in honour of the Brave Berkshires.

The Imperial War Graves Commission was attempting to contact the next of kin of the fallen to find out if they wished to place an inscription on the headstone. There would be no private war memorials; each stone would be the same for all ranks. Only the inscription could differ. For many the cost of 3½d a letter was prohibitive.

Whilst the dead were being remembered, the casualty lists continued to appear. The first list of 1919 showed eleven more killed, six dead, three died of wounds, two still missing and forty wounded. Of these, four killed, four dead, two died of wounds and thirteen wounded were from Reading. The good news was that eleven PoWs had returned home to Reading.

One of the casualties was Leonard Morris of 'Dunnville' on the Basingstoke Road, who died of wounds on 24 December at 81 General

Hospital in Marseilles. Aged twenty-three, he had been wounded serving in Italy with the 1st/4th Royal Berks on 1 November.

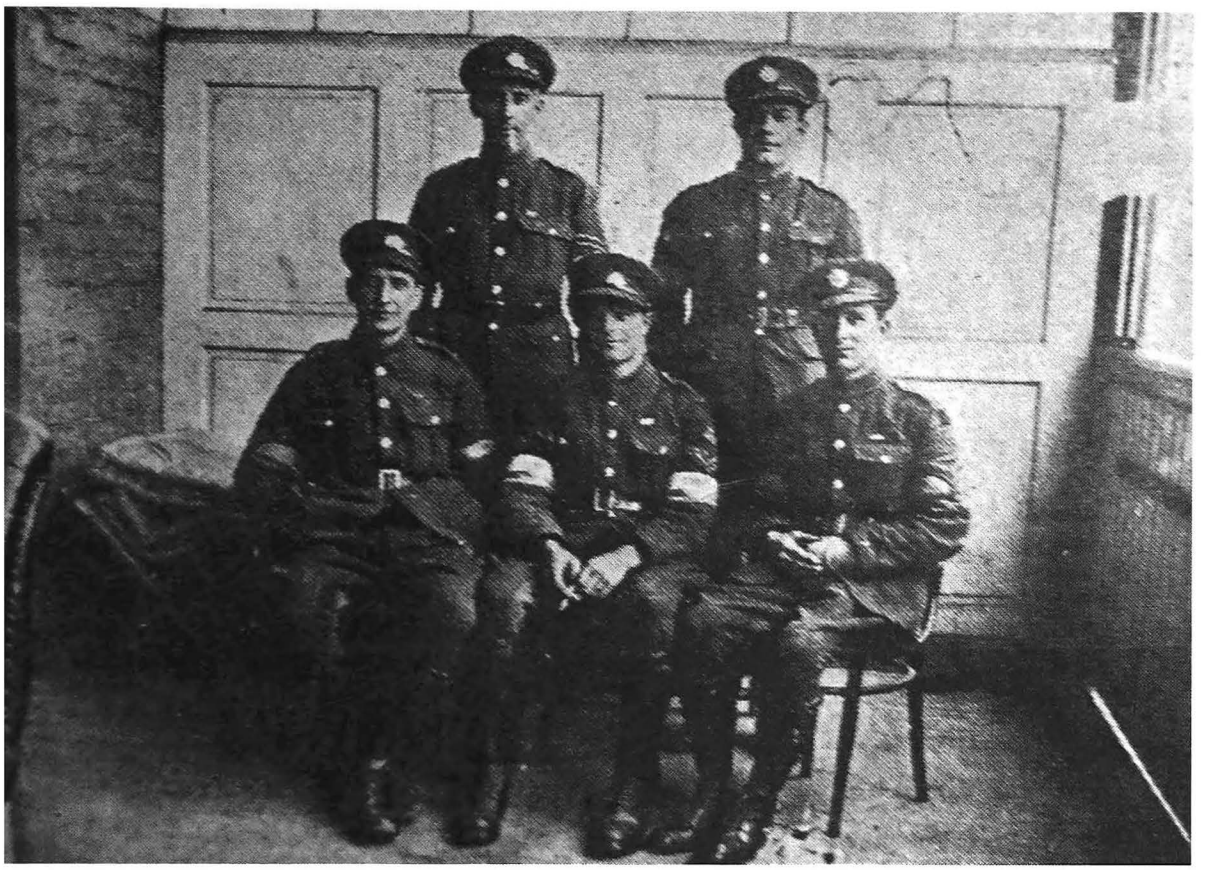
The following week, another casualty list named nineteen wounded, one wounded and missing and two dead, all from Reading. At the end of January, further names were being added to Reading's Roll of Honour: one killed, one dead and one died as a PoW. Even as late as the end of March, new names were being added: one dead and one died of wounds, with two who were reported killed and one who was believed to have been killed. And then there were those who had survived but were still succumbing to influenza and its resulting diseases. On 21 February, Gunner Arthur Ward, of 7 Blenheim Road, a twenty-year-old only son, died in hospital of bronchial-pneumonia. And less than two weeks later, Herbert, the dearly loved husband of Ada Pendlebury of 33 Mill Lane, died of double pneumonia at the age of twenty-eight. Lieutenant Targett, a forty-five-year-old, married with three children, ran a polo farm in Wokingham. He was returning from France after serving with the Veterinary Corps when he caught a chill that turned into pneumonia. He died in Arras on 19 February.

In a memorial service, held at St Luke's Church, on 1 February, the Bishop of Wakefield enunciated in his sermon what many believed. While his comments were about ex-Public School boys, those in Reading who had lost a loved one would have agreed that 'the country has lost some of its best' and that there was now a gap that time would never fill.

Bradfield College's war cross would echo the bishop's comments, listing 257 fallen. A further 395 had been wounded. Old Bradfieldians were also proud of the honours they had been awarded: 250 British decorations, including six Victoria Crosses, sixty-eight DSOs and 121 MCs, plus 50 foreign decorations.

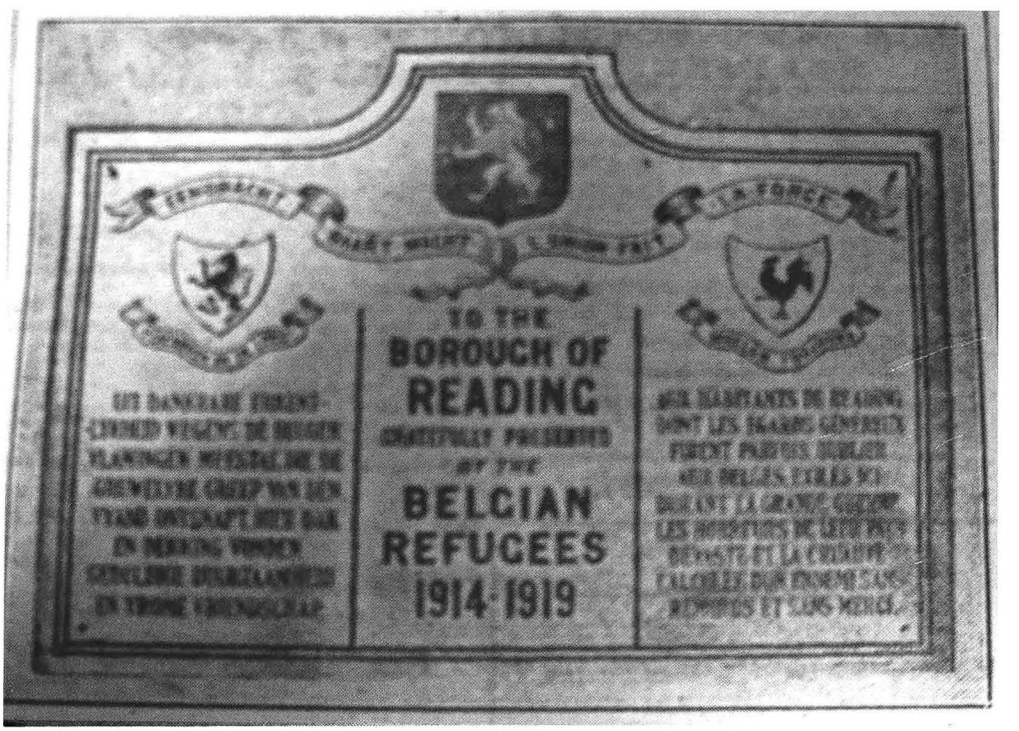
By the end of December, demobilisation had begun and men from many different regiments returned to pick up their civilian lives. Many would not return for some considerable time because of their 'demob' classification but by mid-January the barracks were processing 300 men a week. While the soldiers returned, the Belgian refugees presented the town with a leaving gift of a three-coloured brass commemorative tablet.

Among those waiting were 30 Middlesex Regiment, naturalised British citizens but of enemy alien parentage, who were stationed in



Five local men who went to France with 32 Division Signals and were still acting as despatch riders with the unit in Germany in 1919.

When the Belgians left Reading they presented the Corporation with a gift. The plaque is on view in the museum.



The Kaiser's Own or correctly 30 Middlesex Regiment parading with their complete kit. They were all enemy aliens who had been naturalised or born here but whose loyalty the government were unsure.

The team that wrote, directed and produced the score of the very successful pantomime 'Ala-ed-Deen'. From the left Lance-Corporal Manton, who wrote the libretto, and Privates Lowry and Hilf, the music. All three were members of the Kaiser's Own.

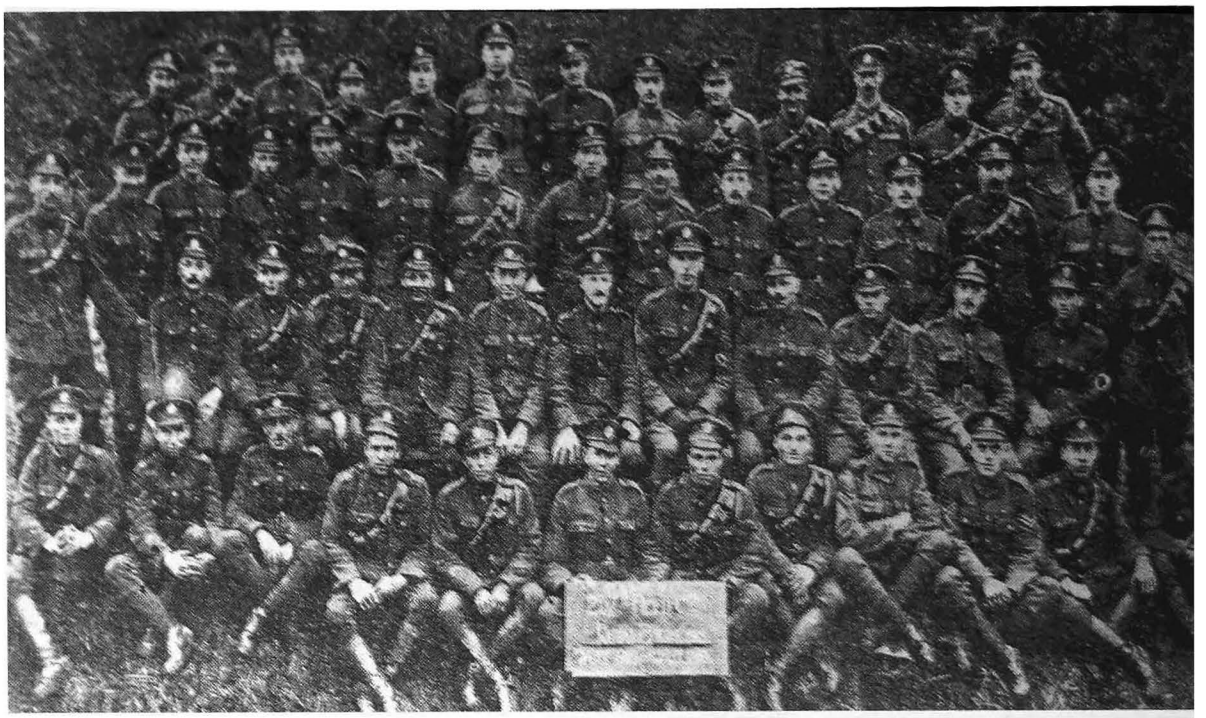
the area. While waiting for discharge, they organised, wrote, created the score and directed their own pantomime 'Ala-ed-deen'. Staged in the large Town Hall, it was such a quality show that it made a profit of £320 which was donated to the RBH.

While men in the army wanted out, the Volunteers happily kept on going. 'Orders for 16 March: Church Parade, 9.40 HQ for 10 a.m. service at St Giles to be followed by a route march. Dress uniform and belts. The band will attend. Dismiss at 1 o'clock.' However, less than two weeks later, they were told to hand in their bayonets and scabbards. Time was running out for the Volunteers as well.

Each week more and more returned PoWs arrived at home. Of the many, six stood out. They had been taken captive at Kut. They described their poor treatment. After capture they had all their belongings and most of their clothes taken. They were then marched through a desert for 600 miles, sleeping in the open with no covering, and little to eat except raw grain. Along the way, men died from hunger and exposure. On arrival they were put on railway construction: hard work with poor conditions and little food, a potato and some chicken corn. Everyone's food was stopped if a man went off sick and flogging was used to stimulate the men's energy. The Turks refused to let the men have the Sabbath off so they went on strike. In retaliation, all NCOs were flogged, each receiving fifty stripes with the bastinado. After eighteen months of such treatment, the food did improve and some parcels arrived but these were always pilfered. For the whole of their captivity they were treated cruelly and had nothing positive to say about the Turks.

Bugler Victor Josey of 11 Blakes Cottages had a different story to tell about his times as a PoW. He had been captured by Austrians on 16 June 1917 and, although food was always short, he had been treated kindly. On 3 November he had been let free with other PoWs and headed towards Allied lines. He was attended to by the Red Cross and then handed back to his unit who thought he was dead. He had been reported Killed in Action two months earlier.

Only 2 Battalion Royal Berks expected to join the occupation force in Germany. At the end of January, the Battalion's colours, which had been placed in the officers' quarters at the barracks for safe-keeping, were taken to France. They were handed over in a special ceremony, ready to head the battalion on its march into Berlin. Unfortunately its

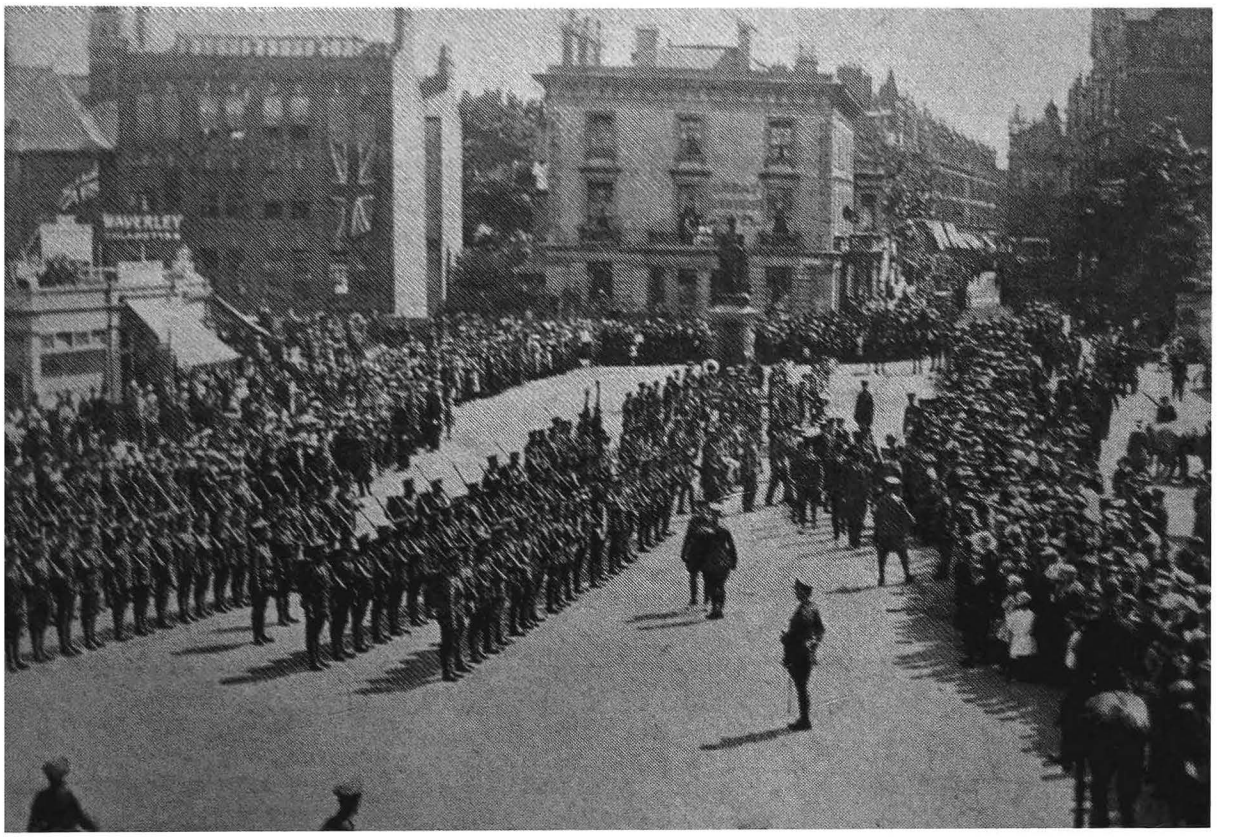


Local men of 237 Field Company RE who went out to France in May 1916 and were still serving in it in January 1919.

parent division was not selected and the Battalion had to wait until 1926. Even then it did not reach Berlin, serving only in Cologne.

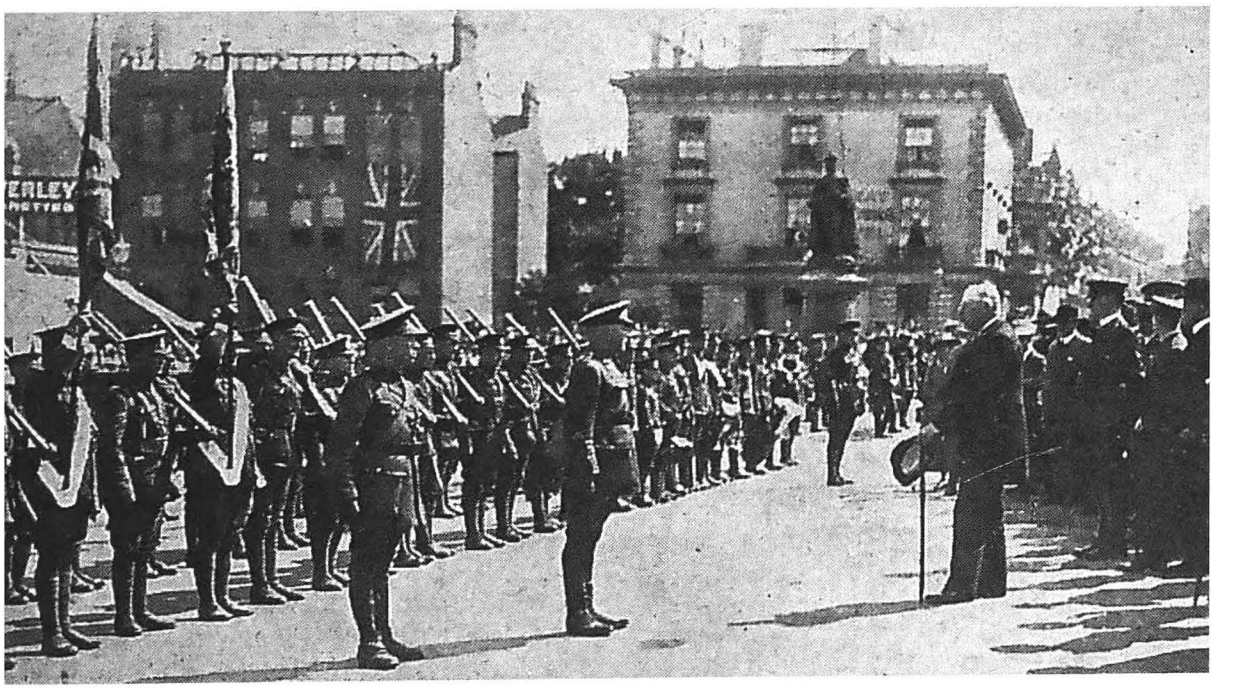
Before the victory celebrations many companies and organisations took stock of their contribution to the war. Their obvious pride is shown in the articles appearing in the press. Elliott & Sons had a Roll with 152 names, including three directors' sons. They had been fortunate with their losses and awards, having only eight killed in action, and seven men winning the MM and one the DSM. Venner & Sons had forty names on their Roll of Honour, with five killed, four dead and one commissioned (WFF Venner). For Wheeler Bros., of the twelve on their Roll of Honour, one was a French Military Medal winner (killed in action), one had drowned (J. Absalom) and another had been wounded.

During June, the Post Office Roll of Honour – present whereabouts unknown – was unveiled in Broad Street Post Office. Decorated with Union Jacks and other patriotic emblems, it comprised 295 names (more than even just a few weeks earlier). Of these, six were female, 267 had served in the army, sixteen in the Air Force, six in the navy and six in the QMAAC. Of the 70 per cent full-time males enlisted,



A very large crowd gathered outside the station for the official welcome of the 2nd Battalion.

The 2nd Battalion are congratulated on their achievements by the Lord Lieutenant.



Female Post Office outdoor messengers were willing, capable and intelligent workers. After the men had been demobilised many continued to work for the Post Office.

twenty-eight had been killed or died on active service, D.L. Hamilton had been promoted in the field and a number had won awards. J. Bushell had won the DCM and MM, two others had won the DCM, one the MM, one was MID, one OBE and two MSMs. Six had been commissioned including a boy messenger, fifty had become NCOs: one QMAAC forewoman, five CSMs, twenty-seven sergeants, seven corporals, nine lance-corporals and one Petty Officer.

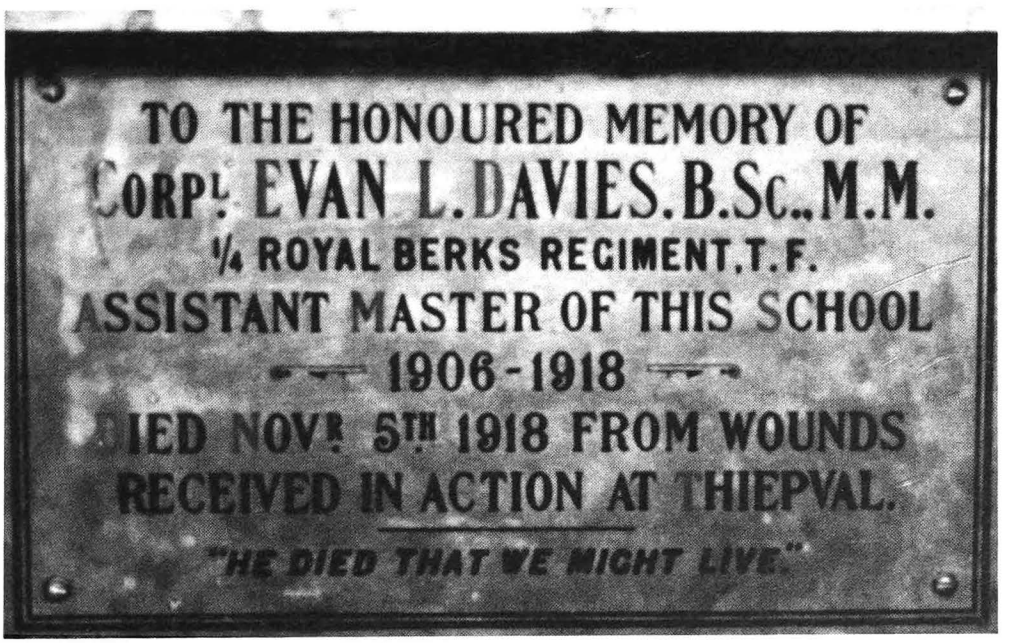
Huntley & Palmers Biscuit Factory had prospered from the demands of the British forces. From an initial order in August 1914, production had risen rapidly and, by the end of 1915, £84,000 of orders had been completed. This had risen to £653,000 by the end of the war and millions had been made. The Number 4 standard biscuit was not the company's only contribution to the war effort. It had provided fancy biscuits for BEF canteens, YMCA establishments and military hospitals and had packaged 250,000 tins of basic rations for the army in tins made by Huntley, Bourne and Stevens. War-time restrictions and shortages had, however, reduced the range of products from 400 to just 50.

As the biggest employer in the town, Huntley & Palmers had the longest Roll of Honour. They recorded that 1,833 employees, including three directors, had served and that 145 had died. Men had served in

100 different battalions, in heavy and light cavalry, all branches of the artillery, the RE, RAF, RAMC, AOC, ASC, TC and Armoured Cavalry Corps. They had won forty-seven distinctions: 1 DSO, 4 MCs, 5 foreign decorations, 3 MSMs, 1 DSM, 1 DCM, 1 DFC, 5 MIDs, 25 MMs and 1 MM and bar, serving on the seven seas and on land: France, Belgium, Germany, Russia, Romania, Italy, Austria, Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, India, Persia, Mesopotamia and East and West Africa. Several employees were badly wounded, several suffered amputations, another was struck in both legs, both arms, and back, and lost part of a finger, being wounded in fifteen places in all. A Military Medal winner was wounded twenty-eight times while attending injured comrades under fire. The vessel on which one sailor was serving was struck thirty-four times. Another was on three torpedoed vessels in succession. One soldier was in the sea swimming about for ninety minutes before being rescued. At the time of writing, June 1919, the firm had kept their promise to re-employ the men – 862 had returned and all were at work, except five who were too incapacitated.

Its main business had been biscuit making. It had supplied the Expeditionary Forces Canteen, YMCA, military hospitals and many charitable organisations with all kinds of fancy biscuits for every theatre of war. Most biscuits were sent in tins or tin-lined boxes, but to preserve their freshness, more than 250,000,000 were wrapped in 1,200 tons of greaseproof paper. They had sent all the biscuits received by

A memorial plaque to a teacher at Alfred Sutton School.


TO THE HONOURED MEMORY OF
CORPL EVAN L. DAVIES. B.Sc., M.M.
¼ ROYAL BERKS REGIMENT, T.F.
ASSISTANT MASTER OF THIS SCHOOL
1906-1918
DIED NOVR 5TH 1918 FROM WOUNDS
RECEIVED IN ACTION AT THIEPVAL.
"HE DIED THAT WE MIGHT LIVE."

A memorial tablet to the pupils of Alfred Sutton School who gave their lives during the war. The Australian soldier F. Bird and Royal Marine R. Gatehouse are both commemorated on it.

PoWs and provided 4/5th of the total output for troops in the field.

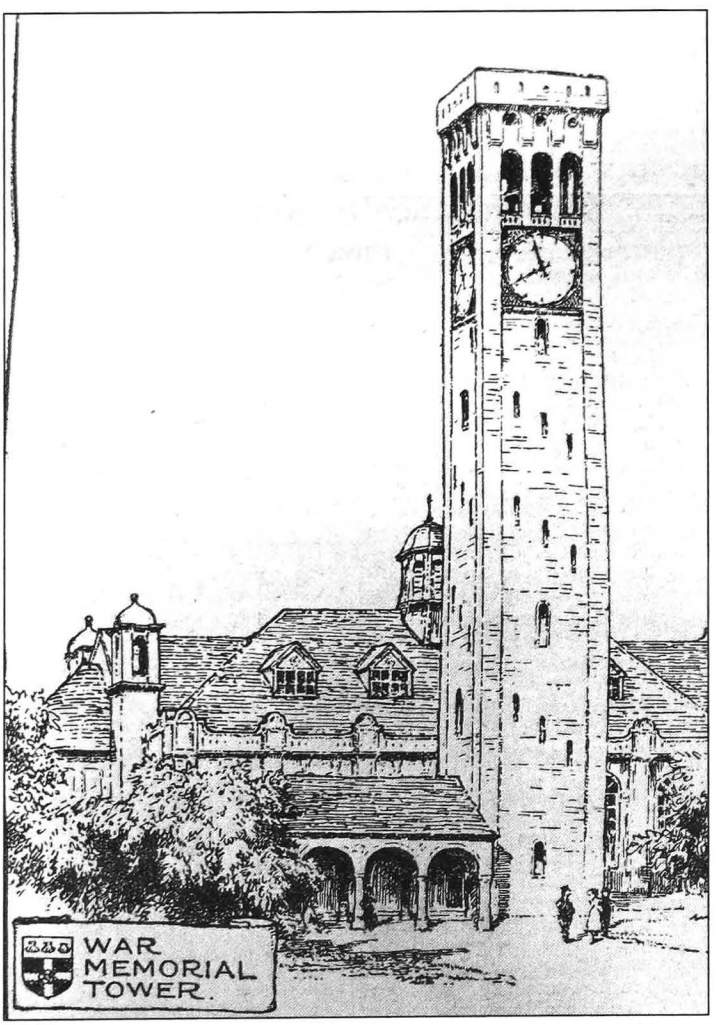
Huntley & Palmers had made other products besides biscuits. Its engineering department was a sub-contractor to the Pulsometer Company of Reading to make shell cases. Female employees had manufactured 60,000 shells using 800 tons of bar steel. The shells were highly spoken of by the experts. With a rejection rate of 1 in 600 they 'earned the accolade "Every Huntley and Palmer shell (sic) is like a piece of jewellery".' The directors saw this as a rare tribute to their female employees. Its engineering department had made aeroplane engine parts, gun rifling, gun winding apparatus, dyes for smoke-bombs and other war material. The company had also raised £41,000 for the YMCA, with the Reading branch contributing £13,000.

Huntley, Bourne & Stevens had stopped nearly all ordinary work to focus on war production. They had made millions of tins for various purposes, smoke tins, helmets, water bottles, fuse boxes, emergency rations tins, cigarette tins, while of course continuing to produce tins for Huntley & Palmers.

University College had been deprived at one blow of many academic staff and nearly all its male students and initially suffered financially. However, it was pleased to say that it had weathered the

storm and played a full part in national service during the war. Its contribution had been varied and substantial. 'The two men's halls of residence, the athletic ground, and a large portion of the teaching buildings were given over to the Royal Air Force, who established in Reading one of their chief schools of training. Instruction for munition workers was instituted at the College, under the charge of two members of the teaching staff, and 675 workers passed through the workshops during the period of the war. Large numbers of women were trained for work on the land, and special courses in agriculture were arranged for disabled officers and men. The Fine Art Department was busily engaged in the manufacture of hospital appliances for disabled soldiers. Under the auspices of the College, a V.A.D. hospital was established in a large house in Christ Church Road, where more than 1,300 patients were received in the course of the war.' The 120 men who died were consecrated on the Roll of Honour and would eventually be remembered with funds used to construct a clock tower.

In a company such as Allen & Simmonds, most of the work force



University College decided to commemorate its fallen with a memorial tower.

had been in a reserved occupation. They emphasised output as their contribution to the war. The business had concentrated on making aircraft engine parts and gun mountings for aircraft. They employed 600, of whom 150 were women and 100 discharged men. They had made 73,851 aluminium pistons, 56,484 gudgeon pins for these, 3,000 cylinder heads, 2,000 cylinders, 153,891 piston rings, 78,195 obturator and securing rings and thousands of other small parts, including 6,500 machine gun mountings.

Many Reading men had returned during the war, and more were being released when they were fit enough to go home. There was an urgent need for jobs for the disabled, many of whom had had their jobs promised for their return but who were not physically able to do the same work because of their injuries. The push for jobs would reduce the numbers drawing the unemployment allowance. A body, Employment for the Disabled, was created to try and ease these men back into employment. It reported in mid-January that 'among the many men in Reading waiting for work were twenty who stood out and needed light employment.' Of these 'seven had one leg missing but sound in other respects, four have a disabled leg, rendering walking difficult, three have the right arm (the implement of livelihood) missing; and one has an arm weak from a gunshot wound; one has the left arm missing; three are weak in the left arm; one, though sound in limb, is weak in heart.' Such men needed work as caretakers, watchmen, boot repairers, machine minders, messengers or timekeepers.

With the closing down of war contracts, many with immediate effect, jobs simply vanished overnight, putting further pressure on the employment market. Allen & Simmonds, shortly after displaying such pride in their contribution to the war effort, were informed over the weekend of 7 February that the Ministry of Munitions had cancelled a number of contracts. A hastily convened board meeting quickly came to the conclusion that there was no choice but to reduce the number of employees. Calling the employees in on Saturday morning, the managers explained the situation and told them there would be up to 300 job losses. Workers would receive a week's pay in lieu of a week's notice. The board were apologetic and explained that the same was happening in other Reading firms and that the number of unemployed would reach considerable numbers. When the loss of the high wages

MOTOR CARS! MOTOR CARS! MOTOR CARS!
W. VINCENT,
72-76, CASTLE ST., READING.
PHONE 1047.
Telegrams—"VINCENT, READING."
ORDERS NOW BEING BOOKED FOR NEW CARS.
SUNBEAM, WOLSELEY, STELLITE, BELSIZE, FORD, etc.
By placing your name on my Waiting List now (with no obligation to purchase) you will ensure early delivery. All orders taken strictly in rotation.
Full Particulars on request.
Second-hand Cars of nearly all makes in stock. Inspection invited.
Cars taken in part payment.
W. VINCENT,
MOTOR & COACH BUILDER,
72-76, CASTLE ST., READING.

War over, back to business. Military production rapidly moved to civilian goods. Cars once needed by the military were now available to the public.

that had been paid were taken into account, it was clear diminished spending strength would have a knock-on effect on trade in the town. The firm had made good their promise to re-employ those who had joined the colours, and had intended to do the same for all skilled labour they had to let go. Fortunately this was not the case for all the firms in Reading, some of which were still busy.

Industrial unrest briefly returned to Reading on 6 February, passenger and goods traffic was seriously affected by a strike on the SW Railway at Reading. Several members of the Drivers and Firemen's Union refused to carry out their normal duties. Very few passenger trains arrived, some goods were turned away and others held up. If it had continued or spread, the Military Authorities had undertaken to assist, using soldiers to perform the work.

An issue that had seemed settled in 1918 became a political hot

potato when the Reading Labour Party protested against the building of 500 houses near Manor Farm. They felt the site was completely unsuitable and requested the mayor to call an immediate meeting to consider this urgent matter. The council voted 20:2 against using the land. That plan was dropped and replaced by consideration of the Earley Court residence of the late Alderman Hill plus the surrounding meadowland, all of which was near to the town and the tramways. Another suggestion was the Norcot estate of the late Sir Walter Palmer, Caversham Park estate, and four acres between 642 and 712 Oxford Road.

These were followed by suggestions ranging across the whole borough and even into the Bulmershe estate in Woodley. Then in June it was decided to build 300 houses on the Shinfield Road site and 300 on the Norcot estate. Houses would be in pairs and similar to the designs proposed for the Manor Farm estate.

Why did the council take so long to make their decision when the need was obvious to all, especially in light of the pre-Christmas partial collapse of housing in Bosier Street? 'Ample evidence that better tenements are necessary in the town was afforded early on Sunday morning when three houses in Bosier Street – a thickly populated neighbourhood in Coley – partially collapsed.' With only a slight sound of cracking, roofs collapsed and portions of outer walls gave way. Fortunately no one was killed.

War-created organisations were redundant without a war. After working voluntarily for three-and-a-half-years, the Reading War Hospital Supplies Depot was closed on the afternoon of 12 March. However, the orthopaedic section was kept going until the government could take over the work. It reported that it had raised £9,286 1s 5d and spent £1,172 for wood and metal for the carpentering department and £5,178 for textiles and other small items, leaving a balance of just over £1,000. From a tiny organisation, the depot had grown till it employed 1,500 workers. During its existence the depot had made and distributed 642,118 articles, sent 14,976 knitted comforts to troops abroad, mufflers, mittens, socks and helmets; 4,477 crutches, 24,251 wooden splints, 1,616 pneumonia jackets, 102,552 bandages, 422,792 swabs and dressings and 3,109 pairs of pyjamas.

Next to go was the National Egg Collection for the Wounded which had collected and distributed 42,000,000 eggs. Even though it was

Vice-Admiral H.L. Fleet with the committee of the Red Cross in Reading.

closing down it held a final Flag Day and raised £137 13s 10¼d. The Reading branch had been very successful and was asked by the government to continue on a smaller scale, providing eggs for particular hospitals such as the Dreadnought Albert Dock hospital.

On 15 July the last VAD hospital in Berkshire, and one of the last in the country, was closed. Struan House had opened on 24 November 1914 and treated 1,980 patients.

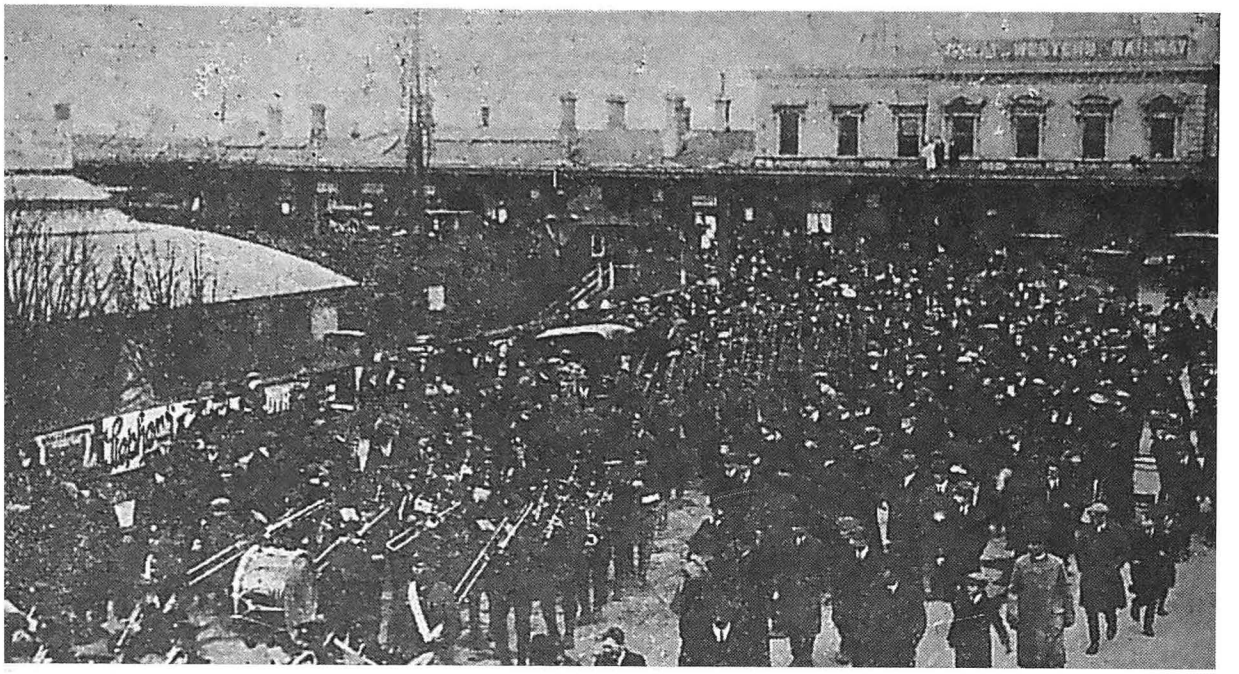
In place of the casualty list, there appeared a list with no names; an invalidity list of requests for suitable employment written by an unknown third party. As the year grew older, that list became longer. The following are typical of the many that appeared during the year. 'Eighteen-year-old, arm, leg and collar bone broken would like light work to suit disability till well enough to return as fitter's mate.' 'Age 32, married, gunshot wound right arm and chest; was a painter but is too shaky for ladder work.' 'Aged 46, married, right foot crushed, was formerly a blacksmith.' '24, single, lost right arm and right leg, was a baker, requires work to suit disability.' 'Aged 21, single but has to keep widowed mother and brother aged 14, intelligent and outspoken, expressing himself well. Disability gunshot wound in stomach. Cannot bend as having lost some of the muscles at the right side, previously a labourer at Harrison's, chemists, desires clerk's work.' '30 year-old

with locomotor ataxy would like a sitting job.' '45 year-old married, rheumatism and gastritis, cannot do lifting, giddy at times for short periods, drayman and bricklayer by trade would like a watchman's job or similar work.'

Six months after the Armistice, the papers reported yet another enemy alien in the town. Thomas Jager of 61 Addison Road was charged with being an enemy alien and failing to notify his Registration Officer of his arrival in Reading and with travelling more than five miles from his registered address without a permit. When the Bench found out that he was married to an Englishwoman, had lived in England since he was four months old and that his sympathies were with his adopted country, they dismissed both charges on payment of costs.

Civic dignity required some form of celebration for the returning men of the Berkshire Regiment. The first to arrive was the cadre (a group of soldiers left behind in battle to form the nucleus of a new battalion if casualties are very high) of the 1st/4th Battalion at 2.10 pm on 31 March. It was led by Colonel Whitehead, DSO and bar, Captain J. Crawford and Lieutenant and Quartermaster R. Hogarth, a well-known Reading man with twenty-three years' service with the battalion who had fought in the South African war. A large crowd waited for them as they marched out of the station and formed up. They were welcomed back by the mayor and the crowd gave them three cheers. Headed by the depot band they marched to the barracks and along the way were joined by many who had already been disembodied (contracted period of service was over). At the barracks the C.O. told them that within limits they could 'eat, drink, and be merry'. Those who lived in Reading were allowed home. The remainder were served a good dinner.

The next were 1 Battalion who arrived from occupation duties in Germany. They were met 'by unbounded enthusiasm and demonstrations of appreciation'. Thousands turned out and flags were displayed. Seven officers and seventy-one other ranks were met at the station, at 6.50 pm on 8 April, by the Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire in full uniform, with numerous other dignitaries and officers. The depot band and the cadre of the 1st/4th joined the proceedings. After being welcomed by the Lord Lieutenant, the procession, headed by the band and cadre, marched to the Town Hall through thousands of well-

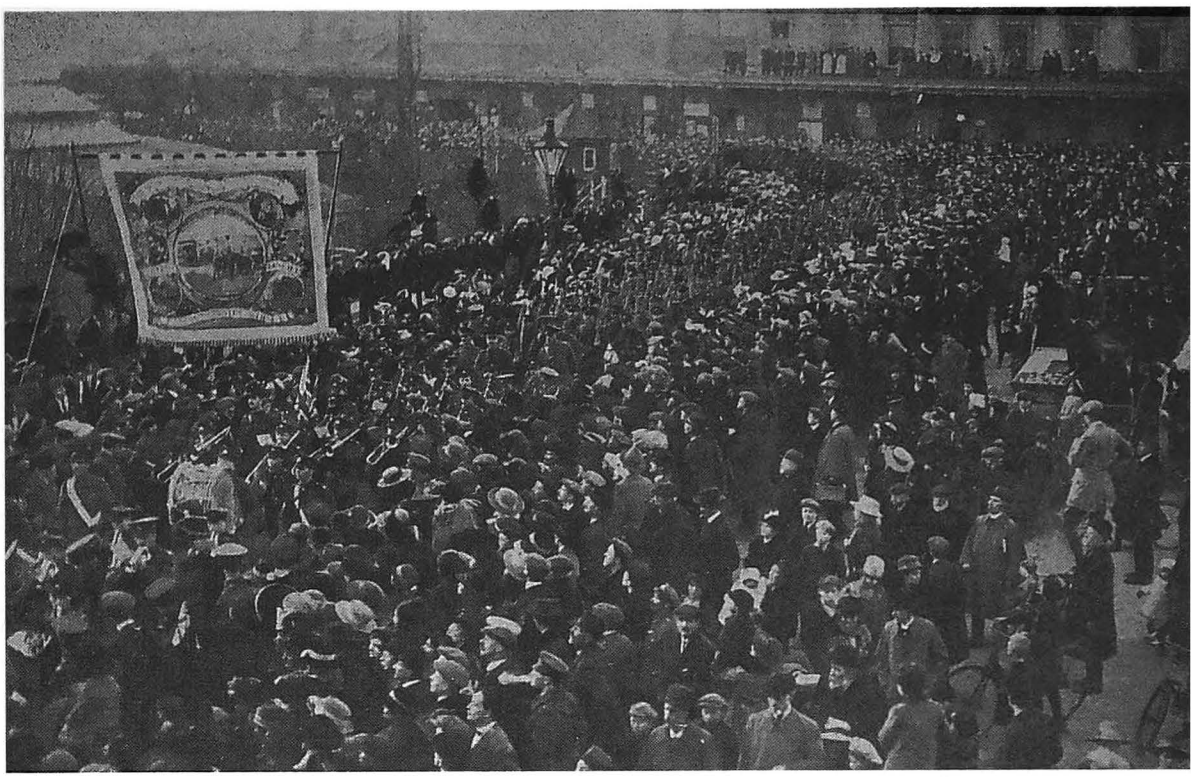


Although there was little warning of the 4th Battalion's arrival, a good-sized crowd cheered their return.

wishers. They were met by the mayor and corporation in their robes and a solid mass of people on all sides of the municipal buildings. The speeches could be heard only with difficulty as the bells of St Laurence's rang a peal. The men then had refreshments in the small hall, with beer being provided by Simonds' Brewery while the officers were entertained in the civic offices. Followed by a large crowd, the men later marched to the barracks where they were dismissed to eat supper in the gymnasium.

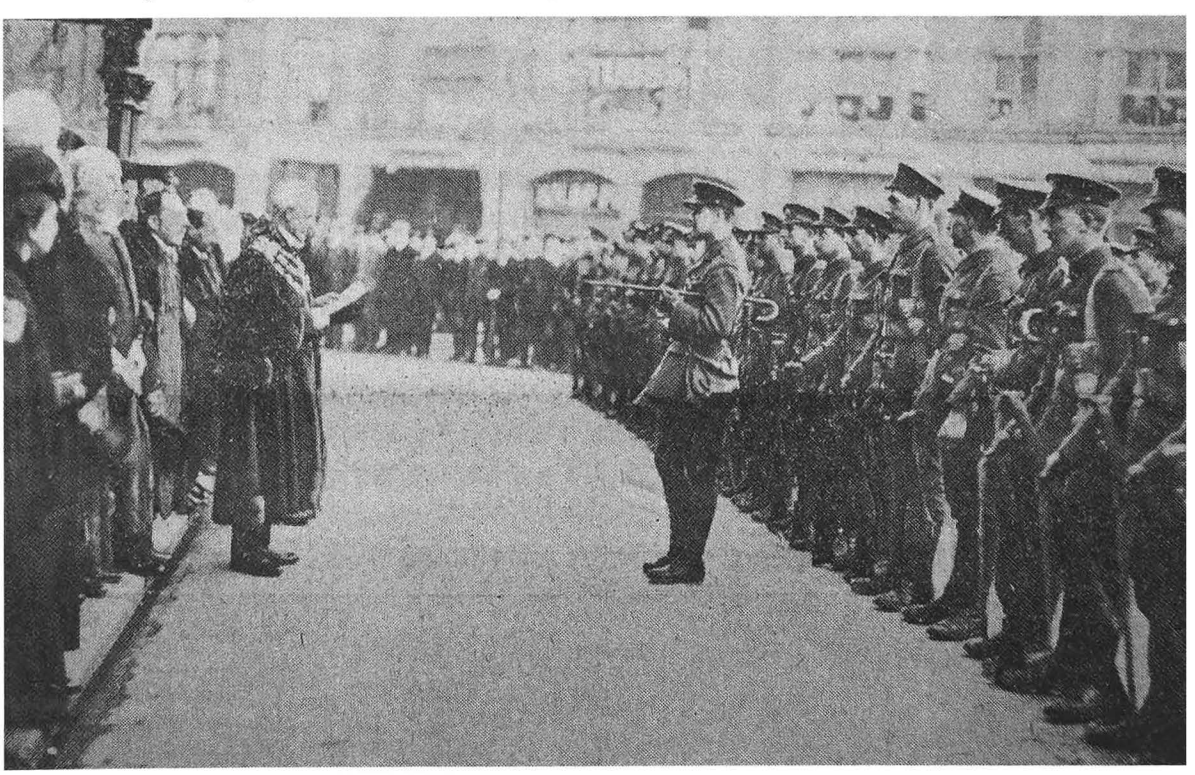
The 2nd Battalion and 1st/1st Berkshire Yeomanry arrived in Reading on 17 May at 2.30 pm to crowded streets decked with flags and bunting. 'On arrival at Reading the cadre and band were formed up outside the railway station, and received an address of welcome from the Lord-Lieutenant of Berkshire. Proceeding to the Town Hall, another address was received from the mayor and corporation. Light refreshments were provided, and then the cadre and band marched through the principal streets of Reading to the Depot Barracks, receiving an enthusiastic reception on the way with resounding cheers and waving flags and hankies.'

For the first time since 1914, schools could once again celebrate and enjoy Empire Day. In common with practically every other school in the country, Reading schools celebrated Empire Day with patriotic



The 1st Battalion marched from the station to the Town Hall for speeches and food.

The Mayor addressing the cadre of the 1st Battalion outside the Town Hall before they were entertained to refreshments inside the hall.

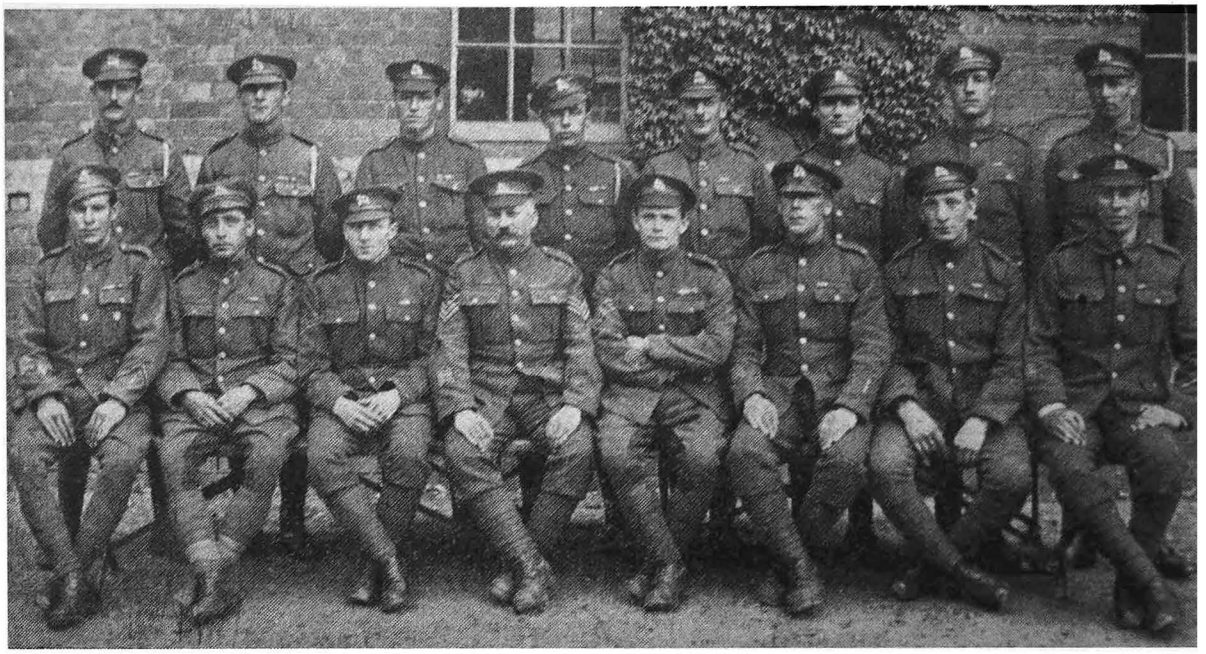


Surplus military aircraft were often turned into passenger planes. This plane took off from a field in Whitley giving joy rides.

demonstrations in the morning and were granted the usual half-day holiday in the afternoon.

Pre-war fun was returning. The papers were full of cricket fixtures and bowling competitions and racing events. There were 'gay scenes at Ascot where all records were broken'. The racing was excellent, 'attendance remarkable, decorations very effective and the dresses magnificent'. The trains from Reading were crowded to excess but extra trains were provided on Gold Cup Day. The buses were busy and 'the stream of traffic along the roads was extraordinary'.

Slower to return home were 5 Battalion. After handing over their equipment at Southampton when they landed, the cadre of four officers and forty other ranks were ordered to proceed to Reading. In the late afternoon on 18 June 1919 they were met by Colonel Foley who had raised the battalion, 'and received a magnificent welcome from the mayor and corporation, and also from the inhabitants of the town who had heard it was coming. After having been formally received by the mayor and corporation and entertained to tea at the Town Hall, the battalion marched to the barracks, headed by the band of the 1st Battalion, and the following day the remainder of the men were

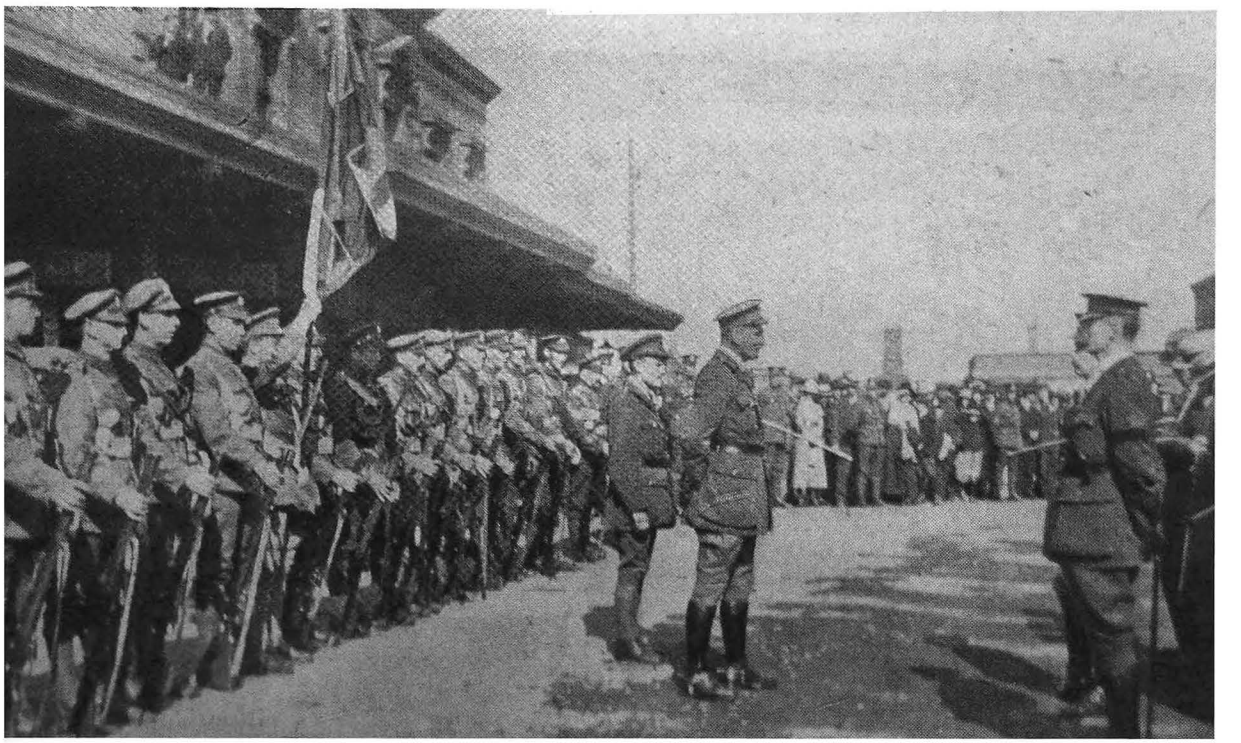


Over 1,000 men had left with the battalion for overseas service. On the return of 5 Battalion only sixteen men were still serving with the battalion.

disbanded and given warrants to their homes. Previous to marching back to the barracks, after the Town Hall reception, the King's Colour was deposited in the Parish Church adjoining the Town Hall, and was received by the vicar.' In the group were about sixteen men who had joined the battalion in August 1914 and served with it for the whole war. They were granted a free evening and the next day most went on permanent leave.

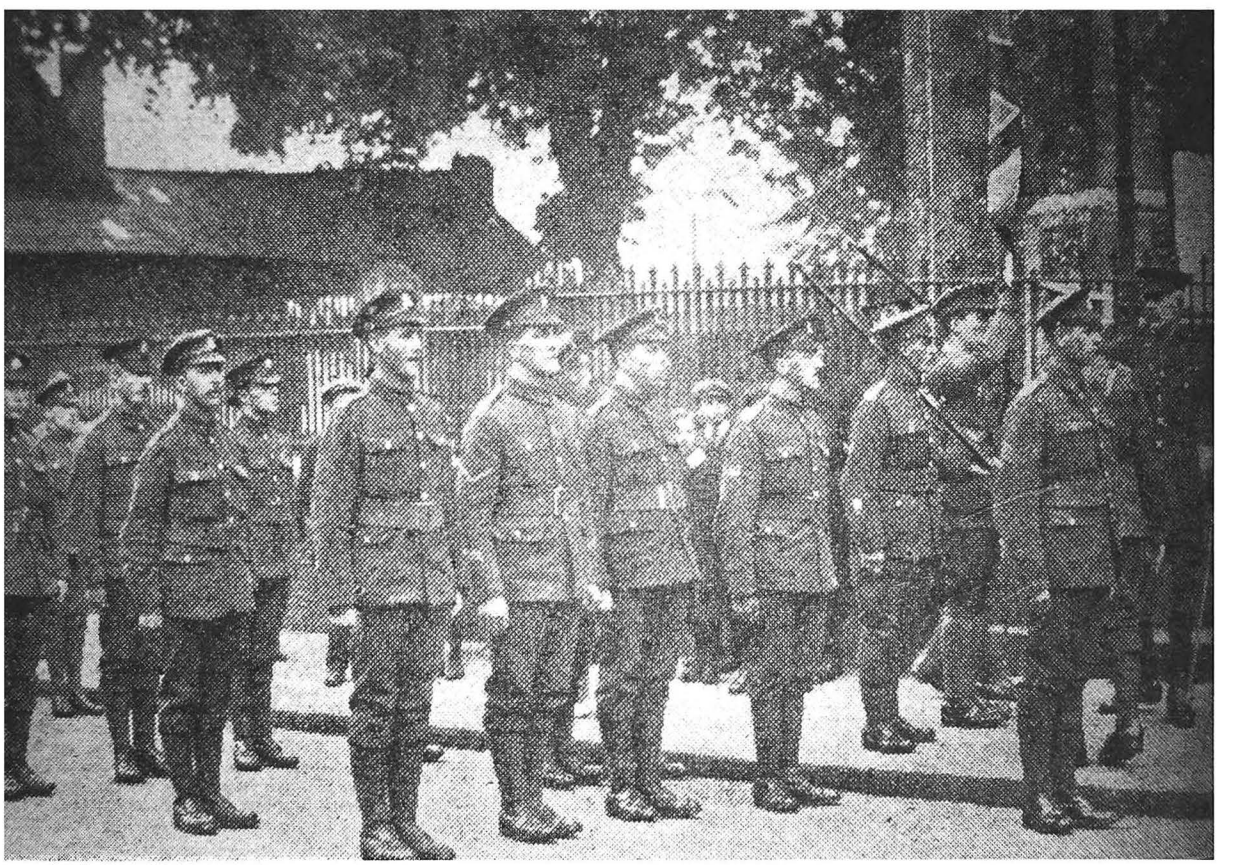
In July it was proposed to open a subscription for the purpose of providing a permanent memorial to those ORs (Reading Boys School) who had fallen in the war. It was not until late 1921 that the decision on the form of the memorial – names on a series of oak panels – was taken and where it was best placed – in the school chapel. The war memorial was unveiled on 18 February 1922 by the local MP, Lt. Col. Wilson, in front of a large gathering.

There was no homecoming parade for two battalions; 6 Battalion had been disbanded in February 1918 during the army reorganisation and 8 Battalion had simply disappeared after being reduced to cadre in April. On 6 July, 8 Battalion colours were laid up at St Giles and later



Colonel Foley of the depot addressing the cadre of 5 Battalion outside the station.

Handing over the Colours of the 8 Battalion for safekeeping in St Giles' Church.

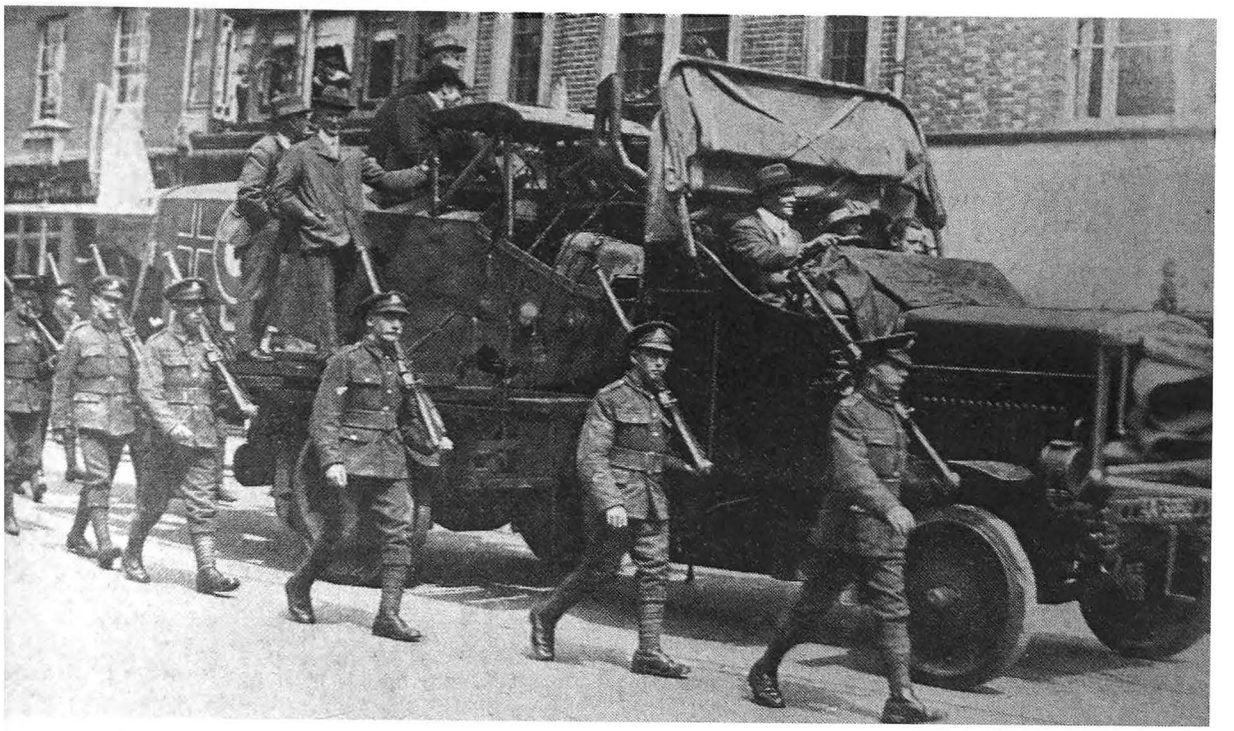


in the day five men of the Royal Berks were awarded the 'Mons Star': RSM Vockins, RQMS Booker, C/Sgt Gibson, Sgt S. Smith and Private E. Gregory.

In order to encourage further saving, a Victory Loan was launched at 5 pm on 7 July when three Locker-Sampson armoured cars that had served in Russia arrived in Broad Street bedecked with War Loan adverts. The cars had also fought in France, Belgium, Romania, the Ukraine ('against the raging forces of anarchy'), Persia, Turkey and Kurdistan. The next day balloons were released that released pamphlets at a set height over the town. On Wednesday, two lorries drove along Broad Street carrying the wings and body of a German Fokker aeroplane that was left in Market Place. In less than two weeks, £300,000 had been subscribed.

Churches and chapels were crowded on Thanksgiving Day for the signing of peace. Reading's official service was held at St Laurence's in the afternoon with a congregation that overflowed into the aisles and the porch. Music was provided by the band of the 2nd Battalion to a congregation of troops from the depot, Colonel Wilson, MP, the mayor

The Victory Loan procession passes through the town.



A captured German plane is transported through the town to help raise money for the Victory Loan.

THE CHRONICLE, FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1919. 15

ISSUE OF

4% FUNDING LOAN, 1960-90.

Redeemable within 71 years by means of a Sinking Fund.

Interest payable half-yearly on the 1st May and 1st November.

A First Dividend as follows will be paid on the 1st NOVEMBER, 1919 :—

ON ALLOTMENTS APPLIED FOR	"Fully-paid Allotments."	"Instalment Allotments."
on or before the 21st June	£1 : 0 : 2 per cent.	£0 : 2 : 3 on each complete £1000 in allotments of £7000 and upwards.
from the 23rd June to the 28th June	£1 : 7 : 7 per cent.	£0 : 1 : 6 " " "
" 30th " " 5th July	£1 : 6 : 1 per cent.	£0 : 0 : 9 " " "
" 7th " " 12th "	£1 : 4 : 6 per cent.	nil.

PRICE OF ISSUE £80 PER CENT.

Payable as follows :

1. For FULLY-PAID ALLOTMENTS :
   - On Application ... ... £80 per cent.
2. For INSTALMENT ALLOTMENTS :
   - On Application ... ... £ 5 per cent.
   - On Tuesday, the 29th July, 1919 ... ... £10 "
   - On Thursday, the 21st August, 1919 ... £10 "
   - On Thursday, the 18th September, 1912 £10 "
   - On Thursday, the 16th October, 1919 ... £10 "
   - On Thursday, the 13th November, 1919 £10 "
   - On Thursday, the 11th December, 1919 £15 "
   - On Thursday, the 8th January, 1920 ... £10 "

   £80 per cent.

ISSUE OF

4% VICTORY BONDS.

Redeemable at par by a cumulative Sinking Fund operating by means of Annual Drawings, commencing 1st September, 1920.

Interest payable half-yearly on the 1st March and 1st September.

First Dividends as follows will be paid on the 1st March, 1920 :—

ON ALLOTMENTS APPLIED FOR	"Fully-paid Allotments."	"Instalment Allotments."
On or before the 21st June	£2 : 15 : 9 per cent.	£1 : 6 : 3 per cent.
From the 23rd June to the 28th June	£2 : 14 : 3 per cent.	£1 : 6 : 2 per cent.
" 30th June " 5th July	£2 : 12 : 8 per cent.	£1 : 6 : 1 per cent.
" 7th July " 12th July	£2 : 11 : 2 per cent.	£1 : 6 : 0 per cent.

PRICE OF ISSUE £85 PER CENT.

Payable as follows :

1.—FOR FULLY-PAID ALLOTMENTS :
- On Application ... ... £85 per cent.

2.—FOR INSTALMENT ALLOTMENTS :
- On Application ... ... £ 5 "
- On Friday the 8th of August, 1919 ... ... £10 "
- On Thursday, the 4th September, 1919 ... ... £10 "
- On Thursday, the 2nd October, 1919 ... ... £15 "
- On Thursday, the 30th October, 1919 ... ... £10 "
- On Monday, the 24th November, 1919 ... ... £10 "
- On Thursday, the 11th December, 1919 ... ... £10 "
- On Thursday, the 8th January, 1920 ... ... £15 "

£85 per cent.

Victory Bonds and a Funding Loan, both ways to reduce the money in circulation and help pay for the war. Note the time-span of the loan.

and councillors, borough magistrates, members of corporation committees, honorary curators of the museum and members of the Reading Board of Governors. 'The service was the special form NO.

3 in the official sheet and was most impressively read by the Rural Dean of Reading (The Reverend Canon Newhome), the hymns were "All people that on earth do dwell", "Now thank we all our God", and "O, God our help". The special psalms were Ciii and C, and the lesson, Isaiah 1xi was read by the Archdeacon of Berkshire. Special prayers were said that peace may be true and lasting, for union and concord with the nations, for the League of Nations, for the church, for rulers and those in authority, for the British Empire, for all those who have suffered through the war, and those who have fallen in the service of their country were commended to the mercy of God.' The service concluded with the National Anthem.

On Sunday, 6 July, the Mayor and Corporation of Reading, and a crowded congregation of the general public, attended St Lawrence's church to thank God for the restoration of peace. Heading the procession are the Mayor, (Mr. S. Hayward), the Deputy Mayor (Mr. F.A. Sarjeant), the Borough Member of Parliament (Colonel Leslie Wilson, DSO), the Clerk of the Peace (Mr. A.H. Sherwood), and the Town Clerk (Mr. C.S. Johnson).

A week later Reading celebrated victory. Although the arrangements had been brought forward from August and the fact that prices were rising, they passed off successfully. 'The town was gaily beflagged and everyone wanted to enjoy it as much as possible despite the rain in the afternoon and evening.'

In the morning of 18 July, the mayoress of Reading planted a small oak, grown from a seed picked up on the battlefield of Verdun, in Forbury Gardens. In the afternoon this was repeated in Prospect Park. There was a large military procession along Broad Street with the Lord

Peace Celebrations.
We have 3,000 Flags for Hire. & 5,000 Flags for Sale.
We offer every possible means of making this occasion memorable to every citizen, and at Prices Well Within the Limits of Every Purse.
SCHEMES PREPARED AND PRICES QUOTED FREE OF CHARGE.
FOR ANY EXTERIOR DECORATIONS AND ILLUMINATIONS.
BANDSTAND AND FAIRY-LIGHTS
STAGE SETTINGS.
PEACE DAY
will mark an epoch in the history of the world, such as the past has never witnessed
IT IS WORTHY OF YOUR BEST EFFORT.
May we help to make your effort in a dignified manner, well worthy of a great and glorious occasion.
CONCERTS
Organised and First-class Artistes supplied
TERMS FREE ON APPLICATION.
Model Programmes prepared and submitted.
CHILDREN'S CONCERTS and SCHOOL TREATS are specially catered for by every form of clean and healthy amusement
N.B.
If you have not yet received our Spring Catalogue please write and ask for it.
SPECIAL DISPLAY OF
"ADASTRA" AVIATION KIT.
Featuring an actual Blackburn Two-seater Sporting Monoplane. The machine which is going to replace your old two-seater runabout car.
SOMETHING NEW THAT EVERY MOTORIST MUST SEE.
Costs less to buy and less to keep than a car. Flies 20 miles to the gallon, 86 miles per hour, 350 miles range. Wants only 40-ft. to land.
Ready to Fly, £450
THE MACHINE WHICH WILL LET YOU LAND ON YOUR OWN LAWN.
ON VIEW from MONDAY, MAY 5th, to SATURDAY, MAY 10th.
THE FINAL WORD IN AVIATION & MOTORING EQUIPMENT.
MOTOR EQUIPMENT.
LADIES' AND GENTLEMEN'S LEATHER COATS
LADIES' LEATHER COMBINATIONS.
HATS and HELMETS.
FUR-LINED and UN-LINED GARMENTS.
SUITABLE FOR ALL JOURNEYS.
Everything the keen motorist requires.
There is no more interesting study to-day than Aviation and all that concerns it. The question of what to wear demands serious consideration and is not answered by those who cater solely for the motorist. Everything we are showing will be the outcome of EXPERT CONSIDERATION AND SKILL IN DESIGN.
AVIATION EQUIPMENT.
OVERALLS.
For altitude flying, in Leather, Lined and Unlined
HELMETS.
Every possible device to make flying easy and comfortable.
THE WAY TO WEAR THEM DEMONSTRATED ON LIVING MODELS.
EXHIBITION COMMENCES ON MONDAY, MAY 5th
ENDS SATURDAY, MAY 10th.
HEELAS OF READING
KNITTING EXPOSITION from Monday, May 12 to Saturday, May 17
You will be able to call and learn, free of charge,
TO KNIT YOUR OWN JUMPER OR JERSEY.
We always have the Finest Stock in the Home Counties of Paton's Wools at 10/2 to 13/- per lb.
RUFFLE AND TEAZLE WOOLS at 13/6 per lb.
VELVENO, at 3/- per hank.
PEARSALL'S FINE KNITTING SILKS, at 10/- to 12/11 per ½-lb. skein. In all new shades.
Call and see the Knitting of these Wools, etc.
Demonstrated and Explained
You cannot be too inquisitive. Questions are invited.
Straight through the door facing the STATION.
An opportunity for all to acquire a most useful, practical and economical LEISURE HOUR OCCUPATION.
N.B.
REGULATION WIRE MUZZLES now in stock.
NOTE THE PRICES IN THE LIST BELOW.
UNION JACKS IN BUNTING.
1 yd. long ... 3/9 2 yds. long ... 12/6
1½ yds. long 7/11 2½ yds. long 18/11
FLAG POLES.
PAINTED BLUE WITH YELLOW POINTS.
7ft. x 1¼in., 3/- ea. 8ft. x 1¼in., 3/6 ea.
9ft. x 1¼in., 3/9 ea. 10ft x 1¼in., 4/- ea.
12 ft. x 2 in. ... 8/6 each
COTTON FLAGS ON STICKS.
UNION JACKS.
12 x 8 15 x 8 18 x 10 24 sq. 30 x 24 ins.
2½d. 3d. 4½d. 8½d. 10½d. each.
TRI-COLOURED MUSLIN FLAGS.
French, Belgian and Italian.
24ins. wide, 7½d. yd. 30ins. wide, 9½d. yd.
ALL COLONIAL AND ALLIES FLAGS IN STOCK.
Cotton Streamers, 18 x 9 ins., 5/6 doz.
Bunting " 10/6 "
" " 24 x 12 ins., 13/6 "
On tape.
Silk Flags on Steel Pins, 6 x 3 ins., 9½d. and 1/- each. In all British, Colonial and Allies colours.
PAINTED WOOD SHIELDS.
14 x 14 ins., with 5 flags, 5/- each.
12 ft. and 14 ft. BAMBOO POLES, 3/- and 3/6 each.
POST YOUR ORDER WITHOUT DELAY.
FLAGS SHOULD BE BOUGHT NOW.

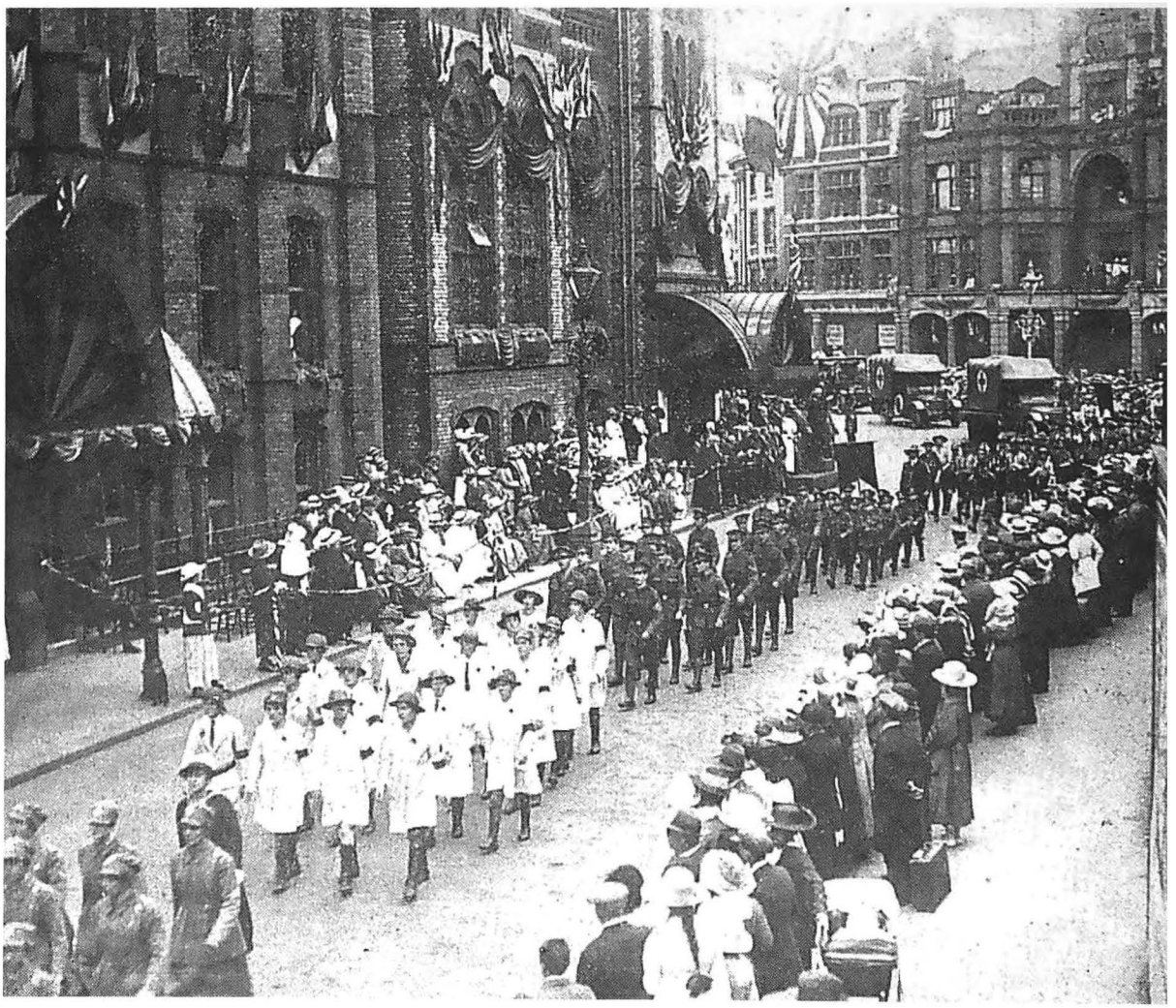
Peace Day was another way to sell goods.

Lieutenant taking the salute in front of Heelas. One part had processed from the barracks, the other from Yeomanry House. So dense was the crowd in places that it was difficult to march. The two columns met and marched together from Castle Street to Broad Street. Large crowds were everywhere, giving a 'cordial reception'. The official procession was joined by two young ladies, attired in the national colours, riding decorated bicycles. 'The discharge of fireworks in the tramlines added to the amusement.' Later in the day a crowd gathered at Bartlett's Cottage to view the burning of an effigy of the Kaiser.

The procession was received at the Town Hall by the mayor. At the conclusion of the march past, the procession divided into two and proceeded to the Town Hall and Corn Exchange for a meal. At each the Lord Lieutenant read the King's message which was followed by deafening cheers: 'I desire you to express my admiration of the courage and endurance of the sailors and soldiers and airmen of your county during the past five years of war. I am grateful to all the brave men and women of the County of Berkshire for their devoted and patriotic

Staff of Messrs Heelas, Sons and Co., on their day out at The Holt, Wokingham. The party was a welcome home to those who had returned from service.

The grand march passes the Town Hall where the mayor and councillors watched.



The grand march past on Peace Day with the depot band at the front. In front of the Heelas' premises the Lord Lieutenant took the salute.

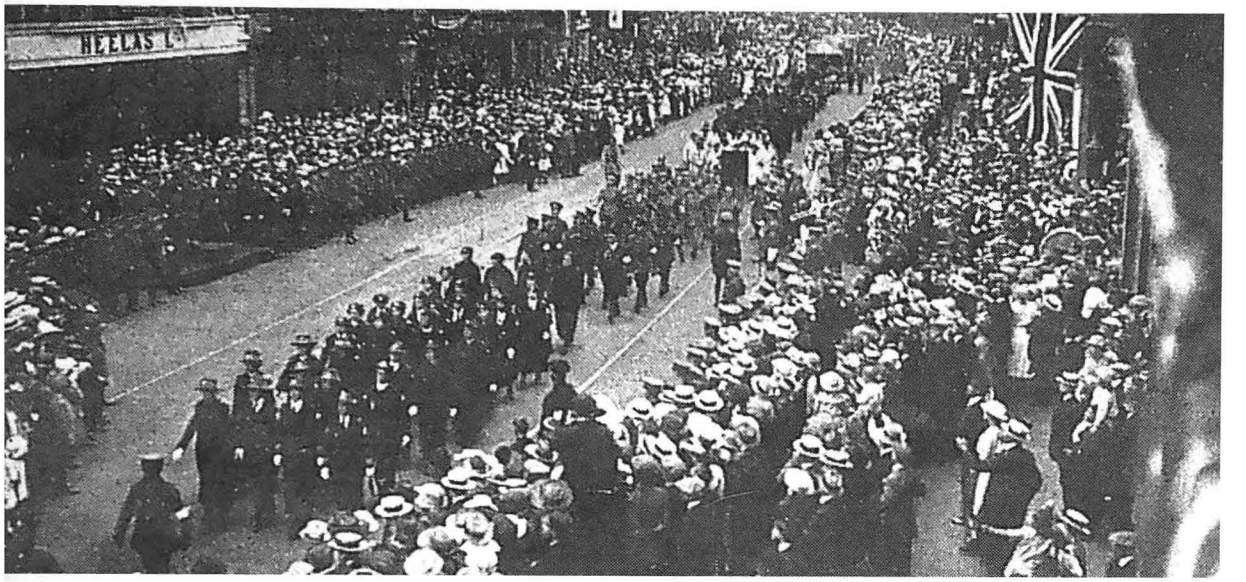
'Feeding part of the five thousand in Prospect Park' on Peace Day.

HEELAS "MAGNET" SALE
POST ORDERS PROMPTLY EXECUTED
FINAL OFFERS
20 Doz. Good Quality Turkish Towels, various sizes — Worth 2/6 To Clear 1/4 each.
40 Balmar Coats Navy, Nigger, Bottle-green & Mixture Tweeds – all at 55/-
Special offer in Nurses Aprons - strong & serviceable – were 3/9 each – now 2/10 each
ONLY 6 MORE ATTRACTION DAYS
Sale Ends Saturday Jan. 18th
SALE TIME IS SAVING TIME
BUY IT FROM
Heelas Ltd READING
CLOSING BARGAINS
10 Doz. Perfect Gents' Woollen Body Belts - were 2/6 Now 6d each.
4 Doz. Ladies' Felt Hats - Usually 10/11 To Clear 4/11 each.
52 Children's Tams in Saxe, Emerald and Brown – were 3/11. To clear 2/11
10 Pieces Fine Quality Dress Serges 50" wide various dark shades usual price 10/11 per yd Special Sale Price 5/11 per yd.
TELEPHONE: READING 995
TELEGRAMS: "HEELAS" READING.

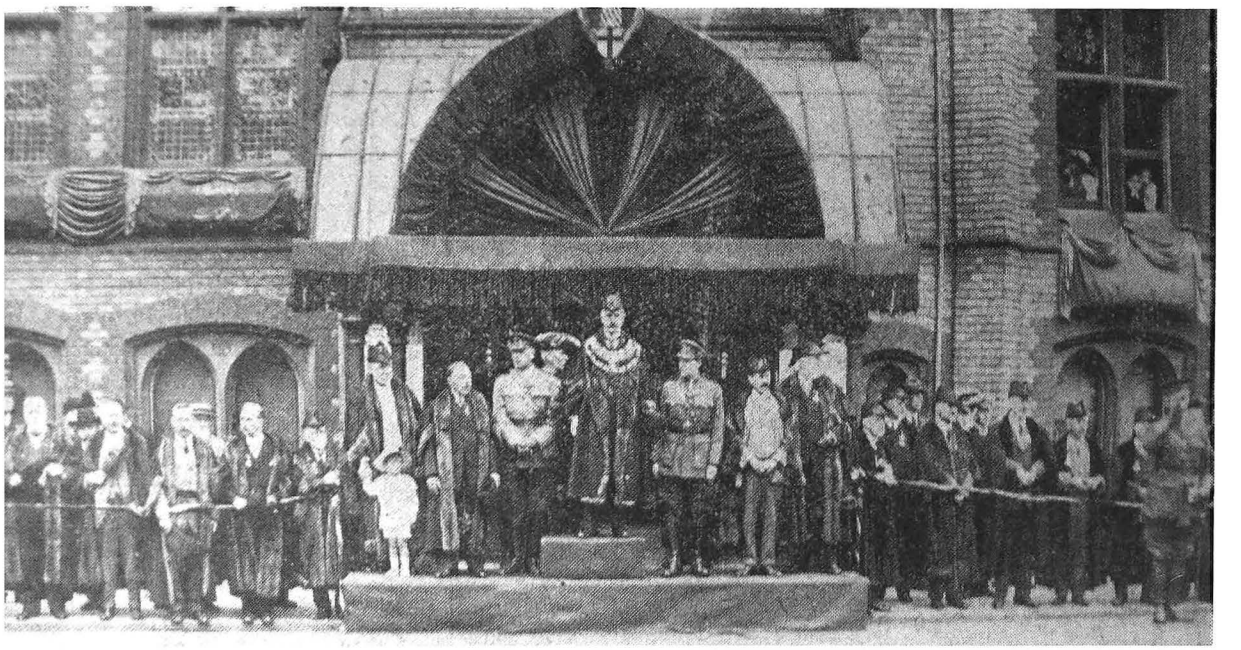
Business as usual with no mention of the war.

service. I once more express my sympathy and that of the Queen with the relatives of the gallant men who have given their lives in their country's cause, and our earnest hope that the sick and wounded may be restored to health. I rejoice with you to-day at the restoration of peace, which I trust which will bring to us all unity, contentment, and prosperity. Signed George R.I.'

Special children's activities were planned in Palmer and Prospect Parks. Each park was allocated a number of schools that organised games, competitions, jazz bands and fancy dress displays. With their



Cheering the march past of the VADs in the Peace Day parade along Broad Street.



The Mayor waiting for the Peace Day procession to pass the Town Hall.

usual benevolence, Huntley & Palmers donated 10,000 bags of 'Good Luck' biscuits. Prizes were provided from a central fund. Unfortunately, the persistent rain stopped the proceedings during the afternoon, but not before everyone had time to enjoy themselves.

Along the river, the Thamesside Promenade was busy from midday till late. On the river races were organised, while on the promenade were coconut shies, hoopla, a mop tournament and numerous other

Some of the 5,000 children in Palmer Park for the Peace Day celebrations.

Old Bill and Little Bill.

Underneath is Flight-Sergt. W. HART, R.A.F., a former employee of Messrs. H. and G. Simonds, who has volunteered for service in the Russian Mission which sails early this month for Archangel. He is one of the four fighting sons of Mr. John Hart, 8, Lincoln Road, Reading, three of whom have been demobilised. Above is his son, who is evidently following in father's footsteps.

A fancy dress prize winner in the victory celebrations.

Not everyone wanted to return to civilian life.

stalls, all doing a roaring trade. An unscheduled river trip took wounded soldiers along the Thames. The *Majestic* and *Britannia* took a military band, a string band, other artistes, the mayor and 160 wounded men to Park Place, where they walked around the grounds. Each man received free cigarettes, and half-a-pound of cherries.

In the evening the main streets were very busy, but the crowd showed no signs of 'Mafficking' (running wild). Flares were lit though the rain spoiled them. A bonfire lit in Thorn Street was small at the start but drew people towards it who threw more and more wood on it until it reached the height of the houses. All the time the hoarding around 'The Triangle' was getting smaller. What began as a small gap ended up as fifty yards of missing fence. Eventually a large police force under Inspector Lickley arrived and cordoned the fire, and at length the crowd dispersed.

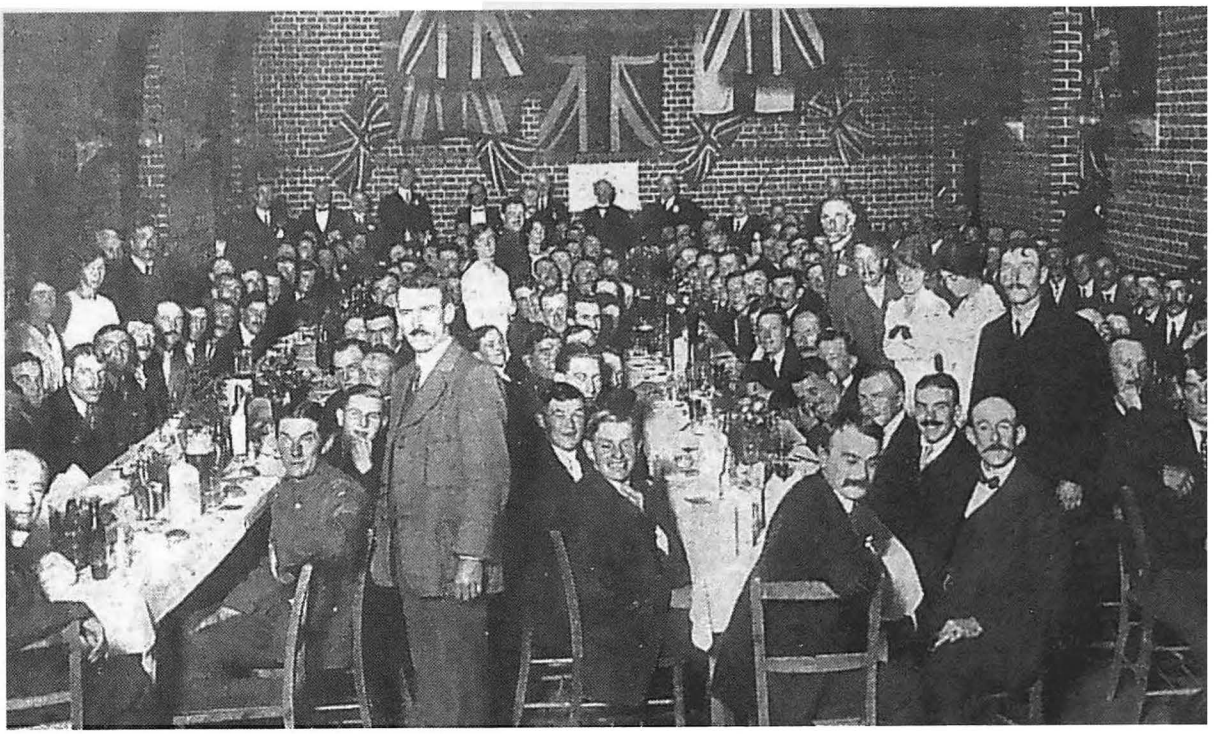
There were fireworks, a bonfire and a concert at the barracks. In Forbury Gardens, 300 people paid 3d a seat to hear the band of the 1st Battalion East Lancashire Regiment.

A tramcar was decorated with massive GRs at each end with draperies in the national colours and portraits of the King and Queen. 'When illuminated at night it made a striking spectacle.' Heelas was decorated in purple and gold with evergreen wreaths with the national colours and a large GR above the main entrance. All the other shops were festooned and decorated. Similarly many of the private houses were a blaze of colour. Some of the 'less well-to-do areas' made a special effort, as did Bembridge Place, where there were 'streamers of flags in profusion'.

For those unable to get into the town, there were local celebrations. In Tilehurst there was a one hour service held in Blagrave Recreation Ground at 1 pm followed by tea in Victoria Recreation Ground from 4.30 to 6 pm.

After the special Peace Edition, the press made little mention of the war. Apart from memorials, the list of wounded needing employment, and a list of soldiers' effects that the authorities were anxious to return to the next-of-kin, life returned to a semblance of its pre-war self.

There was no difference in the crimes reported just before, during and after the war. Cycles were stolen, street traders had no licences, cars were left for too long in main streets, dog licences were not purchased, number plates not displayed, people swore in public, drove



A 'Welcome home' celebration meal in Spencers Wood. The same kind of event happened all over the country.

dangerously, stole pint glasses and six-year-old girls were indecently assaulted. It is apposite to complete five years of war and crime in Reading with yet another unneighbourly quarrel, one that mimics that of Mrs Jennings in Swallowfield nearly five years earlier, showing that little really changes. Esther Maskell of 30 Piggotts Road was summoned for assaulting Cynthia White of number 28 of the same road. There was a second summons in respect of an assault on Daisy Straughton, also of 28 Piggotts Road. The complainant, White, said that as she was preparing to burn rubbish in her garden, the defendant threw a bucket of water over her. This was corroborated by her stepfather. The defendant said her intention was to throw the water over the fire. Daisy Straughton said the defendant threw dirt and stones at her. A fine of 7s 6d was ordered in each case.

Peace was not ratified until 4:15 pm on 10 January 1920. But this time there was no celebration.

Earley War Memorial in the churchyard of St Peter's.

Reading War Memorial with the Maiwand Lion behind on the left.

Chronology

Chronology of the war at home and abroad
This shows some of the major events that were happening at home and on the battlefields.

1917
January

11 Terms of new war loan announced – 5% interest, issue price 95 and principal repayable in 1947 or 4% interest, free of income tax, issue price 100 with principal repayable in 1942.
Important food orders; millers had to increase the amount of flour extracted by additional milling (5%) or to add other cereals (up to 10%); the use of wheat except for seed and flour was forbidden. The same orders fixed the price for chocolates and other sweetmeats.

16 General Lawson's report recommends official employment of women with the army in France.

19 Explosion at Silvertown, East London – 69 killed and 400 injured.

25 Southwold on the Suffolk coast shelled at night by enemy vessel – no casualties.

31 Germany declares unrestricted naval warfare to all neutral states, that is, within the war zone, German submarines will sink both combatant and neutral shipping on sight from 1 February.

February

2 Lord Devonport appeals to the nation for food economy.
Kaiser Wilhelm proposed for the Nobel peace prize by Stambul University.

3 President Wilson severs diplomatic relations between USA and Germany.

6 Mr Chamberlain announces his scheme for National Service.
15 British Government takes over all coal mines in the UK for the period of the war.
17 New War Loan estimated to reach over £700 million.
Government to revise exemption certificates for men under 31.
21 New British blockade orders – vessels sailing to and from neutral countries, which have access to the enemy, must put into a British port for examination, or be liable to capture.
22 Seven Dutch ships sailing from Falmouth are attacked by submarine U3 – 4 sunk.
25 New War Loan subscriptions amount to £1,000,312,950.
Broadstairs and Margate bombarded for 10 minutes by German warships.
Causing slight damage. Three people killed and 1 wounded.

March

1 Air raid on Kent – 6 injured.
3 15,000 women volunteer for National Service in three days.
5 Potato shortage suggested. Meat consumption in London falls from 31,600 tons in January to 23,450 tons in February.
2 Recruiting for WAAC (Women's Auxiliary Army Corps) temporarily completed with 114,803 enrolling for National Service.
3 A speech by Sir Edward Carson spells out the dangers of food shortages if the German naval threat is not stopped. There would be further restrictions as 500,000 tons of food had been sunk in February.
9 Maximum food prices sanctioned.
12 Russian Revolution begins – provisional government formed.
15 Tsar Nicholas abdicates.
16 Acute potato famine in England. Zeppelin raid on Kent and Sussex – no casualties.
German aeroplanes over Westgate – no casualties. Albert Hall meeting in favour of National Service for women. 1st/4th battalion attack at Third Ypres.
17 Aeroplane raid on Kent – no casualties.
18 Ramsgate and Broadstairs shelled by the German destroyers – no casualties.

19 Eight hour day legalised.
Mr Bonar Law announced that the cost of the war was now £6 million a day for the financial year to 31 March 1917. However, over the last six weeks it had cost £7 million a day. The National debt now stands at £3,900,000,000.
20 Ministry of National Service formed. Shortage of petrol and coal.
26 Mr Bonar Law appeals to engineers on strike at Barrow to resume work.
Cost of bread rises to 1 shilling for a four lb loaf and a new standard of flour is applied to bakers.
28 Mr Asquith announces his conversion to woman suffrage.
Women's Army Auxiliary Corps formed.
29 Speech by Mr Bonar Law says 100,000 more men are needed.
Military Service (review of exemptions) Bill is passed.
31 Order limiting output of beer in United Kingdom issued.

April

1 British government decides to intervene in the Barrow Engineers strike.
2 Government give Barrow strikers 24 hours to resume work.
3 Barrow strike over.
4 Hotels, boarding houses, clubs and restaurants subject to food orders – a weekly meatless day, five potato-less days, 5½ of bread, 3½ lbs of bread, 14 ounces of flour and ½ lb of sugar per person. Flour order increases the amount of non-wheat flour in bread.
5 Aeroplane raid on Ramsgate and Kent – no casualties.
6 Food hoarding order – prohibits anyone from buying more than the household actually needs and for dealers to sell food where there is reason to believe that the amount of food allowed will be exceeded; houses can be searched if owners thought to be hoarding food.
9 5th Battalion involved in the Battle of Arras.
5 Board of Trade asks farmers to limit use of human food-stuffs in fattening cattle and feeding horses not doing productive work.
16 Food orders – prices of wheat (78-/ for 120 lbs), barley (65/- for 100lbs) and oats (55/- for 78lbs). Barley to be requisitioned by the Food Controller (other than home grown and not kiln dried).
18 Food order restricting pastry and cake making.

19 Speech by Herbert Fisher, Minister of Education on educational reform and the desire by the government for people to be good citizens. This was to cost around £40 million.
20 Germans shell Dover and neighbourhood – no casualties.
24 7th Battalion fighting on the Doiran Front.
25 Corn Production Bill intended to increase the amount of arable land and guarantee minimum prices to farmers and minimum wages to labourers.
25 German Naval raid on Ramsgate, Broadstairs and neighbourhood on the night of 26/27th – 2 killed and 3 injured.
29 First Battalion fighting at Oppy.
30 Jockey Club decides to stop racing after 4 May.

May

1 New schedule of Protected Occupations; agriculture protected. Under new scheme very few men, and those only in very special circumstances, who are classified A and B1 will be able to escape military service.
2 Further Food orders extend the powers of the Food controller. Budget announced – no new taxes. Estimated expenditure £2,290,000,000 with a revenue of £639 million.
5 Flat racing discontinued due to public opposition. Also the severe restrictions on oats made further sport impossible.
7 Daylight aeroplane raid on NE London, 1 killed and 2 wounded.
8 Combing-out of munitions workers begins.
9 Daily expenditure on the war now £5,600,000.
12 Two new groups of attestation 41 to 45 and 45 to 50.
14 King George tours industrial centres in the North.
Labour unrest – London buses and engineers go on strike; weavers in the north threaten strike.
16 Lloyd George proposes Home Rule in Ireland at once.
18 Unit of USA Medical Corps reaches England.
19 Settlement with Amalgamated Society of Engineers agreed upon.
23 Four Zeppelins raid Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk – 3 killed and 16 injured.
25 Aeroplane raid on Kent and Folkestone – 95 killed and 192 injured; three raiders brought down.
31 Meat sale order published.

June

1 Lord Devonport resigns as Food Controller.
Labour party appoints deputation to Stockholm and Petrograd.
5 Daylight aeroplane raid on Thames estuary and Medway – 13 killedand 34 injured; four machines destroyed while returning.
11 Sailors and Firemen's Union refuse to let Ramsay Macdonald and other delegates sail for Russia.
13 Serious explosion in munitions factory at Ashton-under-Lyne.
Daylight aeroplane raid on London, Margate and Essex – 162 killed 432 injured.
15 Release of Irish rebels announced.
Lord Rhondda appointed as Food Controller.
17 Two Zeppelins raid Kent and Suffolk – 3 killed and 16 injured; one raider downed.
21 Warrant instituting 'Order of the British Empire' published.
23 8th Battalion in Flanders.
25 First American troops arrive in England.

July

2 The King and Queen attend service at Westminster Abbey for jubilee of Canadian Federation.
3 Aeroplane raid on Harwich and Suffolk – 17 killed and 30 injured.
4 Big aeroplane raid on London and Margate – 57 killed and 193 injured;11 enemy aeroplanes accounted for.
11 Sinn Fein Candidate defeats Nationalist in East Clare election.
17 Royal proclamation changing name of Royal House and family to Windsor.
Changes to the government announced including Winston Churchill becoming Minister of Munitions.
22 Aeroplane raid on Essex and Suffolk – 13 killed and 26 injured.
23 Amendment to Corn Production Bill defeated; minimum agricultural wage to be raised to 30/- a week instead of the 25/- proposed in the original bill.
24 Recruiting system to be transferred from War Office control to the Local Government board.
27 Ramsay Macdonald's motion to approve the Reichstag Peace Resolution of 19 July defeated by 148 to 19 votes. 2nd Battalion engaged at Third Battle of Ypres.

31 6th Battalion fighting in Third Ypres Battle.

August

4 The King and Queen attend special service at Westminster Abbey for third anniversary of the war.

6 American troops pass through London on their way to the front; Stars and Stripes and Union Jack flown side by side from the House of Commons.

7 Government proclamation forbids threatened strike of Associated Society of Engineers and Firemen.

10 Labour Party Conference decides by large majority to send delegates to Socialist conference in Stockholm.

12 Aeroplane raid on Essex and Margate – 32 killed and 46 injured; two raiders downed.

13 Bonar Law announces that no passports will be issued for travel to the Stockholm conference.

21 Labour Party reaffirms their decision to send delegates to Stockholm.
Parliament adjourns. Zeppelin raid on East Yorkshire – 1 injured. One Zeppelin brought down off Jutland.. Ministry of Reconstruction formed.

22 Aeroplane raid on Dover, Ramsgate and Margate – 12 killed and 25 injured; three raiders brought down.

24 2nd/4th battalion attack during Third Ypres.

September

2 Aeroplane raid on Dover – 1 killed and 6 injured.
Trades Union Congress at Blackpool partly settles Stockholm Programme but with much opposition.

3 Six German aeroplanes bomb Sheerness area – 132 killed and 96 injured, mostly naval ratings.

4 German submarine fires 30 shells at Scarborough – 3 killed and 6 injured.
Aeroplane raid on London and the south east counties – 19 killed and 71 injured.
TUC declares against Stockholm Conference by overwhelming Majority.
Edmund Dene Morel sent to prison by Winston Churchill for

distributing anti-war literature in Ireland. In 1924 he defeated Churchill for a seat in Parliament and is nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in the 1930s.

5 Price of milk fixed for three months after October at 8d per quart.

11 First party of repatriated British Prisoners of War arrives from Switzerland.

17 Ninepenny Loaf Order in force. Summer time ends at 2 am.

18 Sir Arthur Yapp becomes Food Controller.

24 Aeroplane raid on London, Kent and Essex – 21 killed and 70 injured. Only two of the twenty-four planes penetrate the London defences.

25 Southeast London raided by German aeroplanes – 9 killed and 23 injured.
Zeppelin raid on Yorkshire and Lincolnshire coasts – 3 injured.

27 National War Bonds (5% and 4%, latter free of income tax) started.

28 Aeroplane raid on the Home Counties; raiders headed off from London with no damage.

29 Aeroplane raid on London. Three machines penetrate the defences – 14 killed and 87 injured.

30 Aeroplane raid on London. Four machines penetrate the defences – 14 killed and 38 injured.

October

1 Aeroplane raid on Essex, Kent and London – 11 killed and 41 injured.

2 War Loan issued.

14 Growing shortages of foodstuffs, petrol and coal.

19 Thirteen Zeppelins raid the Midlands, Eastern Counties and London – 36 killed and 55 injured. Five machines brought down.

21 Franco-British convention for military service allows French nationals in the UK and British nationals in France to be drafted for military service.

31 Aeroplane raid on Kent and Dover – no damage.
Further raid on Kent, Essex and London – 10 killed and 22 injured.

November

1 Recruiting taken over by the Ministry of National Service.

8 Arrival in London of USA Mission under Colonel House.

10 Air Force Act sets up new government department – the Air Council with a Secretary of State at its head.
12 New scale of voluntary rations introduced; meat was limited to 2lb, butter and fats to 10oz, sugar to 8oz and bread 3½lb to 8lb per head per week, according to sex and occupation.
19 Rumours that Russia will shortly withdraw from the war.
20 5th Battalion attacks at Cambrai.
21 Disenfranchisement of Conscientious Objectors passed in the House of Commons. 1st/4th Battalion arrive in Italy.
25 1st Battalion fighting at Cambrai.
27 Doctor Elsie Inglis dies on her return with the Scottish Women's Hospitals from Russia.
29 Germany accepts Lenin's offer of an armistice.
Women's Royal Naval Service set up under Katharine Furse.
30 Coventry aircraft works on strike with 50,000 men and women idle.

December

3 2nd/4th Battalion involved in Cambrai battle.
6 Raid by 25 aeroplanes (Gothas and Giants) on Essex, Kent and London – 8 killed and 28 injured. Two of the raiders are brought down.
11 Balfour announces receipt in September of German peace proposals.
18 Aeroplane raid on London, Essex and Kent – 14 killed and 85 injured.
22 Lord Rhonda's scheme for rationing by localities comes into force; main cause of queues removed.
31 Lord Rhonda issues model rationing scheme.
Total air raid casualties for the year – 697 killed and 1,644 injured.

1918

January

5 Lloyd George forms new cabinet.
10 House of Lords adopts Women's Suffrage Clause.
14 The House of Commons reassembles.
Sir Auckland Geddes introduces Manpower Bill.
Yarmouth bombarded by enemy destroyers – 6 killed and 6 injured.

15 Draft of Compulsory rationing scheme issued to Control Committees.
21 Manpower Bill passes committee stage.
23 Public meals order. Average daily cost of the war is now £7.5 million. Labour Party Conference meets in Nottingham and suggests an International Labour Peace Conference to be held in Switzerland.
24 Lord Rhonda outlines comprehensive scheme of national food distribution.
28 Aeroplane raid on Kent, Essex and London – 67 killed and 166 injured; one machine brought down.
20 Aeroplane raid on Kent, Essex and the outskirts of London – 10 killed and 10 injured.

February

6 6th Battalion disbanded and most of the men transferred to 1st, 2nd and 5th battalions.
10 Lord Beaverbrook appointed Minister in charge of Propaganda.
13 Pacifist group in House of Commons defeated.
15 Submarine shells Dover – 1 killed and 7 injured.
Trawler and seven drifters sunk in the straits of Dover.
16 Aeroplane raid on Kent, Essex and London – 12 killed and 6 injured; one machine brought down.
17 Aeroplane raid on Kent, Essex and London – 21 killed and 32 injured.
20 Aeroplane raid on Kent, Essex and London. The aircraft failed to penetrate the London Defences.
21 Department of Information becomes the Ministry of Information.
25 Rationing of meat, butter and margarine comes into force in London and the Home Counties.
26 Lawlessness in Ireland; additional troops sent to aid the police.

March

7 Aeroplane raid on Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and London – 23 killed and 39 injured; one Gotha downed.
6 War Bond week produces £138,870,240.
9 Zeppelin raid on East Riding, Hull bombed – 1 killed.
10 Zeppelin raid on Durham, Hartlepool bombed – 8 killed and 39 injured.

19 The House of Lords debates a resolution approving principle of League of Nations.
21 2nd/4th battalion counter-attacks near Maissemy on first day of German offensive and 8th Battalion withdraw to the battle zone near La Fontaine.
23 1st Battalion in retreat from German offensive.
24 2nd Battalion involved in German offensive.
27 5th Battalion involved in German offensive near Aveluy Wood.
28 Women's Auxiliary Army Corps formed by Army Council instruction; headed by Mrs Chalmers Watson.

April

1 Royal Air Force formed from the RNAS and the RFC.
Women's Royal Air Force set up.
7 Meat rationing extended to the whole of Britain.
9 Lloyd George introduces Man-power Bill which provides for comb-out of munitions workers, call-up of more miners, transport workers and civil servants. Military age raised to 50.
7 Manpower Bill passed with a majority of 223; to have effect from 24 April.
11 Military service for Ireland agreed to by a majority of 165.
Zeppelin raid on Lincoln, Lancashire and Warwick – 7 killed and 20 injured.
12 Final reading of the Manpower Service Bill passed by a majority of 198.
18 Dublin Mansion House conference, after consultation with Bishops, denies right of British government to enforce conscription.
20 First National Emergency Proclamation, withdrawing exemptions up to 23¼ years.
Irish Nationalist MPs unanimously decide to oppose conscription; Irish bishops support them.
22 Budget proposals – Income tax to be raised to 6 shillings and super-tax up to 4s 6d. Farmers' tax doubled. Two penny cheque stamp. Beer and spirit duty doubled. Tobacco, match and sugar duty raised. Luxury tax introduced. Letter rate raised. Expenditure, £972,197,000, Revenue £842,050,000, showing a deficit of £2,130,147,000.

29 7th Battalion raiding positions on the Vardar.

May

11 American troops in London reviewed by the King.
13 Sinn Feiners arrested for plotting with Germany.
19 Aeroplane raid on Essex, Kent and London with five raiders brought down.
Extensive damage and forty-nine killed and 177 injured.
27 2nd Battalion fighting in Second Battle of the Aisne.
28 Government opens discussions with Germany for direct exchange of prisoners.
29 Four million acres added to crop production – 4/5ths of food now home-grown.

June

3 Lord French wants to rewards Irish volunteer soldiers with land.
14 Aeroplane raid on Kent – no casualties.
22 Lord Curzon announces abandonment of Home Rule and conscription in Ireland for the present.
Aircraft workers strike.

July

1 Serious explosion at shell factory in Midlands – 100 killed and 150 injured.
3 Proclamation of Sinn Fein as dangerous organisation.
6 King George's Silver wedding anniversary.
9 Appointment of J.R. Clynes, MP as Food Controller.
11 Government announces stricter treatment of enemy aliens.
18 Aeroplane raid on Kent – no casualties.
20 Aeroplane raid on Kent – no casualties. Threatening meeting of munitions workers in Birmingham.
21 Ministry of Munitions appeals to workers not to strike during critical battle.
22 Lord Lee resigns as Director of Food Production.
23 Munitions workers' strike at Coventry. King visits the Grand Fleet.
24 Birmingham munitions workers go on strike.
23 Conference of National Engineering and Allied Trades' Council decide to strike if there is no settlement before 30 July.

24 Government issues an ultimatum to munitions workers – after 29 July, return to work or be conscripted.
29 Munitions workers' strike ends.
31 Sir Charles Fielding appointed as Director General of Food Production.

August

1 Mr Balfour makes a speech about the League of Nations.
5 Five Zeppelins caught off the Wash; one brought down 40 miles from land.
Lloyd George tells the British Empire to 'Hold fast'.
8 Education Act receives Royal Assent. 5th battalion involved in the Battle of Amiens.
9 Executive of Miners' Federation appeals to miners to increase output of coal by avoiding unnecessary absenteeism.
30 London Police strike. The strikers' demands were for increased war bonus, reinstatement of a dismissed constable and official recognition of the Police Union.
31 London Police strike settled and the men return to work.

September

5 Arrest in London of M. Litinov and other Bolsheviks as guarantees for the safety of British subjects in Russia.
13 Railway strike begins in South Wales.
24 Railway strike, which had begun in South Wales spreads to other lines, affecting the GWR, Midland and the London and South Western.
26 Railway strike in England ended.
30 The Chancellor of the Exchequer opens a 'Feed the Guns' campaign to raise a second War Loan of £1,000,000,000.

October

1 Wages (men and women) committee begins. Milk to be controlled.
9 Milk controlled and jam to be rationed.
14 The King presents £10,000 to the Red Cross.
17 London subscribes £31 million in National War Bonds in nine days.
18 The Prince of Wales gives £3,000 to the Red Cross.

30 Serious influenza epidemic in London; 2,200 deaths in the last week.

November

2 Mass-meeting of Trade Unionists in London to consider Labour's part in the peace.

7 Appointment of Civil Department of Demobilisation and resettlement.
Health Ministry Bill introduced into the Commons.

11 Armistice results in the greatest nationwide celebration ever known.

14 Labour decide to leave war coalition.

15 Meat ration to be doubled for Christmas.
Government announce war casualties – over three million wounded and nearly a million dead. National Union of Railwaymen withdraw from war truce.

22 Metropolitan Police – official force of 100 policewomen.

23 Lloyd George says that the government's task is to make 'country fit for heroes to live in'.

24 Parliament dissolves. Most lighting restrictions lifted. Out-of-work donation scheme begins.

21 First PoW ship docks in Hull.

December

1 Some car driving restrictions lifted

4 Army demobilisation begins.

9 Shop lighting restrictions removed for Christmas. Cotton workers win 40% pay rise.
Pivotal men's release from the forces begins.

11 Edible offal taken off rationing scheme.

12 Men over forty-one called up in 1918 to be demobilised. Rise in horseflesh consumption leads to state control of price.

14 General election – first since 1910

21 Children's sugar rations increased.

25 Christmas holiday extended to 28 December.

28 General election results: Government coalition victory.

31 Over twelve million war contracts terminated. Munitions worker force reduced from 306,000 to 136,000, nearly 300,000 troops demobilised and 124,000 British PoWs reach dispersal camps.

1919

May

4 7th Battalion shipped across the Black Sea to Tiflis.

17 2nd Battalion arrives in Reading

June

18 5th Battalion cadre arrives back in Reading. In it are sixteen of the original volunteers from August 1914.
Peace Treaty signed.

July

19 Peace Day.

October

7th Battalion amalgamated with a Gloucestershire Battalion absorbed into 8th Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

Casualty List

Local area soldier casualties

It is not possible to give completely accurate figures for the number of men killed in any given locality. This is because records were not kept as accurately as they are today: some soldiers enlisted under false names and addresses, some made simple spelling mistakes, for example Charville not Charvil, while others provided few details, so no place of residence is recorded. In some cases this is rather strange. Take for example Three Mile Cross, a village that records no deaths in *Soldiers Died,* but there are two residents of the village listed on the Grazeley Trinity Church Memorial. This lists eighteen names while *Soldiers Died* only lists seven for Grazeley, with two from Three Mile Cross. Where do the remainder come from? For these reasons the CWGC records are incomplete, parish memorials often miss names off, simply because no one was aware of the death, while county boundary changes misplace many men. Complicating matters, many men are commemorated on more than one memorial, for example a school memorial, their regimental memorial as well as their town memorial.

In 1921, eighty-one volumes of *Soldiers Died in the Great War*, by regiment and corps, were published giving soldiers' names, rank, battalion or unit, place of birth, residence, place of enlistment, date of death and region in which they died, plus any military decorations awarded. An officers' volume was also produced. These have been supplemented in recent years by further local research, but the list is still incomplete.

Below, in tabular form, are details of soldier deaths, no officers are included as their official listings give no place of birth, for Reading and villages within a few miles radius – it is not an exhaustive list – merely a snapshot of losses. They are published with 'work in progress'

status, being based on *Soldiers Died* and are necessarily incomplete. These totals may disagree with the numbers on war memorials, however, these are often inaccurate as is clearly shown by the tables when the reader compares the three columns. This complexity is shown by the entries for Earley which total forty-seven in *Soldiers Died* but St. Peter's Church records the names of 112 local men who died. Is it possible that the difference is accounted for by officers in all three arms plus naval and airmen?

The numbers make interesting reading when compared to the total deaths for Great Britain, and also when resident deaths are compared against the deaths of those born in the town or village. In October 2013 fifty-three villages were identified as 'Thankful' or 'Blessed Villages'; settlements in England and Wales from which all their then members of the armed forces survived the war. No village in Scotland or Ireland is classed as a 'Thankful Village'. Similarly no village in Berkshire is classed as 'Blessed' but some, like Riseley, Sonning Eye and Winnersh register no deaths on *Soldiers Died.* Without easy access to naval and air force deaths it is difficult to know whether these villages should be included as 'Blessed Villages'. Recent research has added and taken villages off the list.

Recording deaths on memorials was not an easy matter. Should it be residents, who may have only been there a short time, or those born in the town or village? Some may have family still living there but they had moved on, or even left the country, while some families simply wanted to forget and did not get involved. Then of course there were those who died after the memorial had been consecrated and may not be recorded and those who their loved ones still believed might be missing as the requests for information showed. 'Can any returned prisoner from Germany give information regarding Sapper A. Cook, No. 137828 8th Division 15th Field Co. R.E.'s, missing since May 27th, 1918? Any news concerning him would be gratefully received by his wife at 68, Watlington Street, Reading.'

It is also interesting to compare official statistics against the deaths reported in the papers, through official casualty lists. Perhaps one day there will be an accurate record for Reading.

Soldiers died in Reading			
Year of death	Resident	Born in Reading	Born & resident
1914	32	65	2
1915	95	196	14
1916	93	273	5
1917	130	349	22
1918	110	288	19
1919	0	1	0
Total	460	1172	62

The first resident to die was Reginald Haines who died of wounds on 14 September 1914 serving with 1 Dorsets. According to official documents, the last resident death was Rupert Waite who died on 19 November 1918, serving with 1st/22nd London Regiment. William Willoughby was the first soldier to die who had been born in Reading. He died on 23 August 1914 serving with 1 Royal Scots Fusiliers. James Cox, 4 Yorkshire Regiment, who died on 16 February 1919 was officially the last. To see how far from the truth official records are, the reader needs to read the casualty lists for 1919. The total number of deaths may never be fully recorded.

Soldiers died in Arborfield			
Year of death	Resident	Born in Arborfield	Born & resident
1914	0	1	0
1915	1	3	0
1916	0	0	0
1917	0	3	0
1918	0	1	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	1	8	0

Soldiers died in Barkham

Year of death	Resident	Born in Barkham	Born & resident
1914	0	1	0
1915	0	1	0
1916	1	1	0
1917	0	0	0
1918	2	2	1
1919	0	0	0
Total	3	5	1

Soldiers died in Bearwood

Year of death	Resident	Born in Bearwood	Born & resident
1914	0	0	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	0	2	0
1917	0	0	0
1918	0	1	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	0	3	0

Soldiers died in Burghfield

Year of death	Resident	Born in Burghfield	Born & resident
1914	2	0	0
1915	0	8	0
1916	2	3	1
1917	4	7	2
1918	3	7	1
1919	0	0	0
Total	11	25	4

Soldiers died in Burghfield Common

Year of death	Resident	Born in Burghfield Common	Born & resident
1914	0	0	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	0	0	0
1917	1	0	0
1918	0	0	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	1	0	0

Soldiers died in Calcot

Year of death	Resident	Born in Calcot	Born & resident
1914	0	0	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	0	2	0
1917	0	1	0
1918	1	0	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	1	3	0

Soldiers died in Caversham

Year of death	Resident	Born in Caversham	Born & resident
1914	2	1	0
1915	14	16	3
1916	18	22	5
1917	15	13	1
1918	16	33	4
1919	0	0	0
Total	65	85	13

Soldiers died in Charvil

Year of death	Resident	Born in Charvil	Born & resident
1914	0	0	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	0	1	0
1917	0	0	0
1918	0	0	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	0	1	0

Soldiers died in Coley

Year of death	Resident	Born in Coley	Born & resident
1914	1	0	0
1915	2	2	1
1916	0	0	0
1917	2	0	0
1918	0	0	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	5	2	1

Soldiers died in Dunsden

Year of death	Resident	Born in Dunsden	Born & resident
1914	1	1	0
1915	1	0	0
1916	1	2	0
1917	0	2	0
1918	0	1	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	3	6	0

Soldiers died in Dunsden Green

Year of death	Resident	Born in Dunsden Green	Born & resident
1914	1	0	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	0	0	0
1917	0	0	0
1918	0	0	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	1	0	0

Soldiers died in Early

Year of death	Resident	Born in Early	Born & resident
1914	0	0	0
1915	0	3	0
1916	0	3	0
1917	3	9	1
1918	0	8	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	3	23	1

Soldiers died in Grazeley

Year of death	Resident	Born in Grazeley	Born & resident
1914	0	0	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	3	2	0
1917	0	2	1
1918	1	0	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	4	4	1

Soldiers died in Grazely Green

Year of death	Resident	Born in Grazeley Green	Born & resident
1914	0	0	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	0	0	0
1917	0	1	0
1918	0	0	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	0	1	0

Soldiers died in Henley

Year of death	Resident	Born in Henley	Born & resident
1914	7	7	4
1915	31	26	12
1916	44	35	9
1917	54	50	14
1918	63	43	15
1919	0	0	0
Total	199	161	54

Soldiers died in Hurst

Year of death	Resident	Born in Hurst	Born & resident
1914	1	2	1
1915	3	1	1
1916	1	10	0
1917	3	5	0
1918	2	8	2
1919	0	0	0
Total	10	26	4

Soldiers died in Kidmore End

Year of death	Resident	Born in Kidmore End	Born & resident
1914	1	0	0
1915	2	0	0
1916	1	0	0
1917	0	0	0
1918	1	1	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	5	1	0

Soldiers died in Maple Durham

Year of death	Resident	Born in Maple Durham	Born & resident
1914	0	0	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	2	3	0
1917	0	1	0
1918	4	2	2
1919	0	0	0
Total	6	6	2

Soldiers died in Mortimer

Year of death	Resident	Born in Mortimer	Born & resident
1914	3	1	1
1915	10	9	5
1916	9	9	4
1917	8	6	3
1918	11	16	5
1919	0	0	0
Total	41	41	18

Soldiers died in Shinfield

Year of death	Resident	Born in Shinfield	Born & resident
1914	2	3	1
1915	1	1	0
1916	0	3	0
1917	3	1	0
1918	3	3	1
1919	0	0	0
Total	9	11	2

Soldiers died in Shiplake

Year of death	Resident	Born in Shiplake	Born & resident
1914	0	0	0
1915	1	0	0
1916	0	3	0
1917	3	2	0
1918	0	1	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	4	6	0

Soldiers died in Sindlesham

Year of death	Resident	Born in Sindlesham	Born & resident
1914	0	0	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	0	0	0
1917	0	0	0
1918	0	1	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	0	1	0

Soldiers died in Sonning

Year of death	Resident	Born in Sonning	Born & resident
1914	0	1	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	4	3	0
1917	0	2	0
1918	2	3	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	6	9	0

Soldiers died in Sonning Common

Year of death	Resident	Born in Sonning Common	Born & resident
1914	0	0	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	0	0	0
1917	0	1	0
1918	2	1	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	2	2	0

Soldiers died in Swallowfield

Year of death	Resident	Born in Swallowfield	Born & resident
1914	1	0	0
1915	2	3	0
1916	1	5	0
1917	3	7	2
1918	1	6	1
1919	0	0	0
Total	8	21	3

Soldiers died in Theale

Year of death	Resident	Born in Theale	Born & resident
1914	2	0	0
1915	1	1	0
1916	8	5	4
1917	4	6	3
1918	5	6	2
1919	0	0	0
Total	20	18	9

Soldiers died in Tilehurst

Year of death	Resident	Born in Tilehurst	Born & resident
1914	2	3	0
1915	11	7	2
1916	7	12	5
1917	11	12	3
1918	5	13	3
1919	1	1	1
Total	37	48	14

Soldiers died in Twyford

Year of death	Resident	Born in Twyford	Born & resident
1914	4	0	0
1915	7	6	1
1916	10	3	1
1917	10	9	4
1918	12	5	2
1919	0	0	0
Total	43	23	8

Soldiers died in Wargrave

Year of death	Resident	Born in Wargrave	Born & resident
1914	1	0	0
1915	1	6	1
1916	3	4	0
1917	7	4	1
1918	1	10	1
1919	0	0	0
Total	13	24	3

Soldiers died in Whitley

Year of death	Resident	Born in Whitley	Born & resident
1914	0	0	0
1915	1	0	0
1916	3	0	0
1917	1	0	0
1918	0	0	0
1919	0	0	0
Total	5	0	0

Soldiers died in Woodley

Year of death	Resident	Born in Woodley	Born & resident
1914	1	1	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	2	3	2
1917	5	2	0
1918	1	2	2
1919	0	0	0
Total	9	8	4

Bibliography

Adkin, F.J. *From the ground up*. Airlife. 1983

Ashworth, C. *Action Stations 9 Military airfields of the Central South and South-East*. Patrick Stevens. 1985.

Barnes-Phillips, D. *So many hearts make a school: The centenary of the George Palmer Schools, Reading*. Corridor Press. 2007.

Barnes-Phillips, D. *This is our school. Reading British School 1811-2011*. Corridor Press. 2011.

BFWI. *Berkshire within living memory*. Countryside Books & BFWI. 1996.

Bishop, M. 'Bats, Balls and Biscuits'. Cricket Heritage Project, University of Huddersfield. 2008.

Booker, F. *The Great Western Railway*. David and Charles. 1977.

Charles, B. 'Crime and Calamity in Cholsey'. www.lulu.com. 2013.

Corley, T. *Quaker Enterprise in Biscuits*. Hutchinson & Co. 1972.

Cruttwell, C.R.M.F. *The war service of the 1/4th Royal Berkshire Regiment (T.F.)*. Basil Blackwell. 1922.

Cull, I. *The 2nd Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment in WW1*. Tempus. 2005.

Dearing, J. *The church that would not die*. Baron Birch. 1993.

Dormer, E.W. *The Story of the Royal Berkshire Hospital*. Poynder Press. 1937.

Downs, D. *Biscuits and Royals*. Fericon Press Ltd. 1984.

Earley Local History Group. *Suttons Seeds A History 1806-2006*. Earley Local History Group. 2006.

Eddlestone, J. J. *Foul deeds and suspicious deaths in Reading*. Wharncliffe. 2009.

Farrar, H. *The Book of Hurst*. Barracuda Books. 1984.

Fowler, Rev. Canon. W. 'St Peter's Magazine 1917-18'. No publisher. 1919.

Gray, R and Argyle, C. *Chronicle of the First World War* Volume 2, 1917 – 1921. Facts on File, 1991.
Handscomb, S. *Tilehurst*. Berkshire Books. 1996.
Hylton, S. *A Reading Century*. Sutton Publishing. 1999.
Jeator, A. *The British Red Cross in Berkshire 1907 to 2007*. The British Red Cross. 2007
Ministry of Information. *Chronology of the war*. Constable & Co. Ltd. 1919.
Oakes, J and Parsons. *Old School Ties*. DSM. 2001.
Oakes, J. *Kitchener's Lost Boys*. The History Press. 2009.
Perkins, A. *The book of Sonning*. Baron. 1999.
Petre, F.L. 'The Royal Berkshire Regiment Volume 2 1914 – 1918'. Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment Wardrobe and Museum Trust. 2004.
Phillips, D. Berkshire, *A County History*. Countryside Books. 1993.
Railton, M. and Barr, M. 'Battle Workhouse and Hospital 1867-2005'. Berkshire Medical Heritage Centre. 2005.
Railton, M. and Barr, M. 'The Royal Berkshire Hospital 1939-1989'. The Royal Berkshire Hospital. 1989.
Rooke, P. Redlands *A hundred years at school*. Reading Schools PTA. 1991.
Southern, P. *The story of a prison*. Osprey. 1975.
The *Berkshire Chronicle*
The *Reading Mercury*
The *Reading Observer*
The *Reading Standard*
Trigg, J. 'A County at War Berkshire 1914-1918'. www.johntrigg.org.uk 2007.
Vaughan, A. *Grime and Glory*. John Murray. 1985.
Woodhouse, L. Downs, D. Witts, I. Brown, G. *Wilson School 100 years of memories*. Corridor Press. 2006.

Websites

http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWantigerman.htm
http://www.thedorsetpage.com/history/vc/james_welch.htm

Index

Abbott, Frances, WPC, 28
Abery, Pte George, 80
Abingdon, 62, 127
Adams, Marcus, 113
Addison, Audrey, WPC, 28
Addison Road, 170
Aeroplane(s), 107, 164, 176, 189–96, 198
Agriculture/agricultural, 7–8, 10, 20–1, 23, 48–9, 100, 114, 121–2, 124, 147, 165, 191–2
Air Council, 195
Aircraft, 36, 72, 166, 174, 195–6, 198
Air raids, 71, 84, 108, 142
Airship(s), 19
Albert Hall, 189
Alcohol(ism), 46, 63, 88–90, 132, 134, 153–4
Aldershot, 46, 141
Alexandra Road, 15
Aliens, 26, 116, 158, 198
Allen, Alfred, 139
Allen, P.C., 40
Allen & Simmonds, 56, 134, 165–6
Allied Trades' Council, 198
Ambulance(s), 22, 119
America/American(s), 32, 90, 117, 122, 124, 132, 146, 152, 154, 188, 191–4, 198
Animals, 23–4, 59
Anneto, Alfred, 80
Annison, Mrs Mary, 35
Anti-aircraft, 132
Anti-war literature, 194
Appleby, Edith, 59
Applegate, Lily, 63–4
Arborfield, 122, 204
Arborfield Road, 9
Armistice, 132–3, 135, 139, 143, 146, 170, 195, 200
Armour Cottages, 150
Armour Road, 80
Army Council, 197
Army Service Corps (ASC), 21, 34, 46, 74, 163
Arrest, 15, 25–6, 64, 75, 88, 109, 129, 198–9
Ascot, 173
Asquith, PM, 190
Assault, 19, 23–5, 40–1, 59, 79–81, 153–4, 186
Assault (indecent), 97
Austin, George, Able Seaman, 139
Australia(ns), 26, 31, 79, 96, 124, 164, 203
Austria-Hungary/Austrians/Hungarians, 26, 75, 78, 159, 163
Autumn, 57, 68, 86, 102

Bacon, 12, 16, 51–3, 55, 76, 97–9
Baker, Mrs, 122
Baker, William, 26
Bakers/bakery, 12, 38–9, 69–70, 169, 190
Balfour, Earl, 195, 199
Balkwell, G., 69
Bank(s), 79, 89
Banksian Medal, 67
Barkham, 205
Barley, 47, 50–1, 54, 89, 190

Barnes and Avis, 81
Bartlett's Cottage, 179
Barton, C.E., 31
Basingstoke, 117, 127
Basingstoke Road, 146, 155
Bath Road, 8, 88, 96
Batten, George, 80
Battle Street, 87
Beans, 50–1, 55
Beansheaf Farm, 124
Beard, Sydney, 65
Bearwood, 35, 117, 122, 205
Beasley, Peter, 93
Beasley, 2/Lt A.W., MM, 93
Beaverbrook, Lord, 196
Beckett, L/Cpl, A.J., MM, 148
Bedbrook, Mabel, 129
Bedford Court, 79
Bedfordshire, 196
Beech Hill, 125
Beenham, 39
Beer, 7, 15, 18, 45–7, 53–4, 60, 79, 89, 134–5, 148, 153, 171, 190, 197
Bees, 122
Belgium/Belgians, 112, 144, 156–7, 163, 176
Belcher, Emma, 46
Belcher, John, 46
Belsham, Philip, 97
Bembridge Place, 185
Benyon, J.H., 124–5
Bereavement, 10, 35
Berkeley Avenue, 96
Berkshire:
  Agricultural wages board, 121
  Agricultural War Committee, 48, 100, 114
  Appeals Tribunal, 42
  Archdeacon, 178
  Assizes, 110, 129–30, 154
  Automobile Club, 20
  Chronicle, 8, 10, 12, 14, 35, 48, 54, 77, 84, 91, 102, 130, 132, 143–4, 148
  Council, 57, 91, 117
  County, 7, 9, 14, 20, 34, 42, 46, 48–51, 75, 100, 104, 114, 121, 124, 146, 155, 169, 179, 203
  Education Committee, 117
  Lord Lieutenant, 93, 161, 170–1, 178, 181
  PoW Committee, 144
  PoW Fund, 123
  Room, 65
  VAD, 20, 91, 169
  Volunteer Regiment, 110, 112
  Women's Volunteers, 112–13
  Yeomanry, 6, 104, 171, 179
Bigamy, 15, 116, 129, 153
Bicycle(s)/bikes, 11, 27, 38, 48, 59, 106, 179
Birt, PC O., 153–4
Biscuits, 7, 51, 86, 112, 143, 162–4, 183
Blagrave Recreation Ground, 185
Blake, T., 134
Blake's Cottages, 159
Blenheim Road, 71, 156
Blenheim Street, 71
Blockade, 189
Blue Cross, 78
Board of Agriculture, 122
Board of Trade, 190
Body, Pelham, 59
Bokenham, Dr, 64
Bombardment(s), 72, 189, 195–6
Bombing/Bomb(s), 91, 107, 142, 164, 193
Bone(s), 51–2, 56, 144, 169
Bonham-Carter, Lt Col, 36
Booker, RQMS, 176
Boots (The Chemist), 122, 131
Boots/shoes, 13, 86
Bosier Street, 168
Bosley, Mrs, 122
Boults Walk, 108
Bowler, PC, 26
Boxes, 7, 19, 122, 142, 149, 163

Boxing Day, 148–9
Boy Scouts, 56, 127
Bracknell, 132
Bradfield, 62, 156
Bragg, Harry, 15
Brain, Capt F., 130
Brain, 2/Lt S., 130
Brandy, 64–5
Brazell Family, 71
Bread/loaf, 12, 16, 51–2, 54–5, 69–70, 86, 89, 144, 190, 195
Breen, Patrick, 96
Briggs, Joseph, 129
British Army, 12, 14, 16, 27, 35, 39, 43, 46–7, 55, 64–6, 78, 106, 116, 142, 153, 159, 160, 162, 174, 188, 200
Bridge(s), 57–8, 67, 112, 155
Bridge Street, 154
Brighton, 74
Brighton Road, 69
Brisbane Road, 107
Bristow, Sydney, 40
Britannia (MV), 185
British School, 60–1
Broad, Pte, 106
Broad Street, 64–5, 122, 127, 134–5, 139, 160, 176, 178–9, 183
Broadway, 132
Brock Barracks, 15, 36
Brooker, James, 129
Brooks, Beatrice, 117
Brooks, Eliza, 74–5
Brooks, Maria, 79
Brown, William, 97
Bulgaria, 163
Bull, A.H., 83
Bulls/bullocks, 81
Bull's, 83
Bulmershe Estate, 168
Bulmershe Road, 23, 141
Burberry's, 40–2
Burials/Buried, 43, 87, 111, 132
Burghfield, 205
Burghfield Common, 206
Burglary, 11, 24, 78, 129
Butcher, Luke, 96
Butchers, 20, 52–3, 69, 76, 81, 97–8, 102
Butler, Sgt & Mrs, 83
Butter, 12, 16, 53, 76–7, 97–9, 151, 195–6
Buxcey Family, 69

Calcot, 206
Callas, Sons & May, 38
Campbell, Dr, 53, 89
Canada/Canadian, 82, 90, 117, 124, 154–5, 192
Cannon Road, 78
Card, Albert, 25
Cardiff, 46
Cardigan Road, 46
Carter Family, 67
Castle Street, 68, 77, 179
Castle Ward, 138
Casualty(ies), 5, 10–11, 15–16, 33–4, 43, 69, 105, 110, 139, 146, 151, 155–6, 169–70, 188–91, 195, 198, 200, 202–204
Catapult, 97
Catherine Street, 33
Cattle, 20, 59, 81, 89, 97, 101–102, 190
Caversham, 7, 35, 67, 71, 95–6, 100, 102, 117, 124, 135, 137–8, 140, 147–8, 150, 206
Caversham Bridge, 67, 112, 155
Caversham Council School, 35
Caversham Meadows, 9,
Caversham Park Estate, 168
Caversham Road, 46, 59, 131, 155
Cemeteries, 79, 87, 112
Chamberlain Brothers, 139
Chamberlain, Neville, 189
Champ, Pte A & Gertrude, 139
Chapel(s), 144, 174, 176
Charvil, 202, 207

Chester, Pte J.H., 33
Chestnut Walk, 47
Chief Constable/Chief of Police, 15, 62, 88, 135, 153
Child, 2/Lt Martin, 140
Children, 7, 10, 14–15, 19, 21–2, 25, 27, 29, 39, 56–7, 64, 68–9, 71–4, 77, 90, 93, 96–8, 100, 107–108, 140, 156, 182, 184, 200
Children's Concerts, 22
Chocolate, 54, 188
Cholmeley Street, 139
Christchurch Road, 165
Christmas, 10, 13–14, 16–18, 20, 40, 45, 55, 76, 79, 81–2, 117, 140, 142–3, 146, 148–50, 168, 200
Church Army Hut Fund, 93
Church Lane, 9
Church of England, 93
Church Road, 67
Church Street, 80
Churchill, 192–4
Chylanzi, Jano, 26
Cigarettes, 18, 30, 78, 106, 164, 185
Cigars, 30, 78
Cintra Park, 82
City of London Court, 18
Clarendon Road, 106, 111
Cleary, Michael, 59
Cliff House, 150
Cloth, 110
Clothing/clothes, 13, 38, 40, 64, 68, 74–5, 86, 95, 104, 120, 132, 159
Clyde (The), 15
Coal, 29, 45, 48, 57–8, 75–6, 102, 143, 189–90, 194, 199
Coal gas, 57
Coalition Government, 200
Cocoa, 128
Coffee, 53, 76, 113
Coffin, 79
Coke, 45, 57
Colebrook, 136
Coley, 7, 63, 77, 155, 168, 207
Coley Aerodrome, 57
Coley Avenue, 105
Coley Park, 8, 36–7, 45
Collard, Lt Col, 144
Collection(s), 9, 19, 55–7, 67, 80, 94, 125, 127, 168
Collier, Harry, 41
Colliers (Ltd), 7, 136
Collis Street, 60
Cologne, 144, 160
Colours (The), 159, 167, 174–5
Colours (Joined the), 26, 30, 37–8, 88, 167
Comforts, 19, 93, 168
Comforts Fund, 81
Commission(s), 140, 148, 160, 162
Concerts, 22, 34, 96, 117, 134, 149
Cone, Elizabeth, 80–1
Connaught Rise, 140
Conscientious objectors, 15, 116, 195
Conscription, 9, 15, 52, 65–6, 197–8
Cook, Ada, 109–10
Cook, Hilda, 128
Cook, Spr A, 203
Cook, Stanley, 109
Cookham, 58
Cooper, Arthur, Wine & Spirit Merchant, 64
Corby, Joseph and Lillian, 69
Cordery, William, 40–1
Corn, 49–50, 70, 159, 191–2
Corn Exchange, 179
Corn Syrup, 61
Cosgrave, William, 97
Cottage(s), 13, 65, 140, 150, 179
Court(s)/courtcases, 11–12, 18, 25, 40, 47, 57, 59, 79, 89, 97, 101, 109, 121, 128, 132
Court-martial, 45
Courtroom(s), 63
Cow(s), 25, 97, 123
Cow Lane, 9
Cox, Charles, 107
Cox, Cornelius, 129

Cox, Horace, 154
Cox, James, 204
Crescent Road, 34
Cricket, 11, 34–6, 122, 173
Crime/Criminals, 8, 11, 15, 23, 25, 44, 46, 62, 64–5, 80, 87, 97, 129–30, 142, 153, 185–6
Croom, Alfred, 33
Cross Street, 154
Cumber, W., 125
Cummings, William, 47
Curzon, Lord, 198

Dance(s), 35–6, 81, 91, 134
Davey, Dick, 120
Davies, E.L., M.M. & Mrs, 136
Davis, A., 116
DCM, 94, 110, 144, 162–3
Deadman Family, 105
Death/dead, 15, 17, 28–9, 33, 35–6, 43, 60, 71, 75, 81, 101, 104, 106–10, 121–2, 132, 136–7, 139–41, 155–6, 159–60, 200, 202–14
Dee, L/Cpl Alfred, 69
Defence(s), 194, 196
Defence Corps, 79
Defence of the Realm Act (DORA), 24, 54–5, 101, 152
de Lombas, Philip Alexius László, 75
Demobilisation, 143, 152, 156, 200
De Montfort Road, 134
Derby, Lord, 14, 51
Derby Scheme, 9, 14, 26
Desertion/deserter, 26, 121
Devonport, Lord, 188, 192
DFC, 163
Diphtheria, 29
Disability, 149, 165–6
Dog(s), 15, 20, 25, 185
DORA *see* Defence of the Realm Act
Dover, 137, 191, 193–4, 196
Downham, William, 97
Downing Road, 150
Drink, 45, 47, 63, 79, 89, 153, 170
Drunk(enness), 8, 15, 17, 24–5, 46–7, 63–4, 80, 88–9, 128, 153–4
DSM, 160, 163
DSO, 144, 156, 163, 170, 178
Duke Street, 16, 81
Dummer, Mrs, 14
Dunlop, Lt Brian, 69
Dunsden, 207
Dunsden (Green), 8, 207–208
Dutton, PC, 26–7
Duvivier, Joseph, 129
Dykes', 83

Earley, 7, 18, 26, 58, 69–70, 82, 96, 106, 111, 137, 208
Earley Churchyard, 111, 187, 203
Earley Court, 168
Easter, 11, 45, 48, 112, 117
Easthampstead, 132
East Street, 134
East Yorkshire, 193
Edinburgh Road, 59
Education, 19, 23–4, 30–1, 35, 60, 108, 116–17, 155, 191, 199
Education Act, 199
Edwards, Ellen, 110
Egg/Eggs, 12, 50–1, 76, 122, 125, 168–9
Egypt/Egyptian, 20, 128, 163
Eighteen's, 51, 70, 102, 149
Elderton, Capt F., 101
Elections, 137–9, 192, 200
Electricity/electric, 150
Elgar Road, 40–1, 59
Elliot & Sons, 33
Elmhurst Road, 36
Elm Court, 63
Elm Park, 14, 117, 123
Elm Park Road, 121
Elm Tree, 125
Empire, 10, 178, 192, 199
Empire Day, 10, 171
Empson, Mrs, 122

England, 20, 46, 51, 64, 124, 136, 170, 189, 191–2, 199, 203
Englefield, 11
Enteric Fever, 29
Erleigh Court Lane, 60
Essex, 154, 191–6, 198
Eustace, Mrs, 121
Evans, D., 69

Faithfull, Florence, 124
Faithfull, Lt Col & Mrs, 124
Fancy Dress, 82, 91, 182, 184
Farmer, W., 124
Farmers, 20, 49–50, 97, 190–1, 197
Fat(s), 56, 144, 195
Filey Road, 139
Filmer, Richard, 47
Finchampstead, 50
Fireworks, 135, 179, 185
Fish/fishmongers, 12, 51–2, 59, 102, 149
Fisher, Frank, 139
Flag Day, 19, 22, 78–9, 91, 125, 127, 169
Fleet, Maj A., 105
Fleet, V-Adml, 91, 105, 169
Flint Street, 134
Flitter, PC, 119
Floods/flooding, 9–10
Flour, 12, 41, 48, 51–2, 54, 188, 190
Fobney Street, 47
Fog, 8, 17–18
Foley, Col, 173, 175
Food/foodstuffs, 8, 10, 12–13, 15–16, 26, 37, 39, 47–8, 50–8, 60–1, 68, 74, 76–7, 86, 89–90, 93, 97–102, 108–109, 113, 122, 127, 131, 144, 147, 152, 159, 172, 188–92, 194, 196, 198–9
Food Control(ler), 47, 51–2, 54, 57, 68, 76, 102, 190–2, 194, 198
Football, 16, 23, 82, 105, 122
Forbury Gardens, 45, 99, 178, 185
Fosbery, Dr, 132
Fowler, Rev Canon, 84
Foxhunting/foxes, 10, 102, 125, 127, 130
France/French, 17, 20, 23, 33, 35, 66, 71, 79–80, 92, 96, 99, 104–105, 107, 110, 112, 117, 128, 137, 139, 144, 146–7, 154, 156–7, 159–60, 163, 173, 176, 188, 194
Frances Street, 139
Francis, Pte E., 136
French, Lord, 198
Friar Street, 26, 58, 61, 88–9, 152, 155
Fruit, 24, 55, 62, 82, 148–9, 153
Fuel, 45, 48, 56, 77, 109, 143
Fund Raising, 14, 19–21, 57, 65, 77–8, 81, 92, 122–3, 125, 130
Funerals, 70, 79, 111, 132

Gale, Mrs, 122
Gallipoli, 35
Game, 24, 51–2, 54, 144
Games, 13, 55, 101, 139, 182
Gardner, John, 59
Garret's, 83
Gas/Gasworks, 19, 48, 57, 69, 74, 77–8, 87, 91, 132, 141, 143
Gatehouse, Pte Reginald, 111
Gathorne-Hardy, Hon. Alfred Erskine, 140
Geddes, Sir Auckland, 195
George Family, 136–7
George, Lloyd, MP, 195, 197, 199–200
George Palmer School, 45, 90
George Street, 40
German Army, 56
German/Germans/Germany, 8, 48, 56, 78–9, 86, 97, 104, 106–107, 110, 112, 130, 132–4, 137, 143, 157, 159, 163, 170, 176, 188–9, 191, 193–5, 197–8, 203
German Navy, 189, 191
Gibbs, Frederick, 121
Gibbs, James, 121

Gibson, C/Sgt, 176
Gin, 64
Ginnell, Laurence, MP, 97
Girl Guides, 56
Goblin Toys, 131, 146
God, 18, 78, 84, 149, 178
Goetz, Pte Jacob, 106
Gold, 11, 20, 66, 122, 185
Gold Cup Day, 173
Gosbrook Road, 71
Grain, 57, 89, 159
Granby Gardens, 40
Grazeley, 208
Grazeley Green, 202, 209
Great Knolly's Street, 9
Great Western Railway, 8, 105
Great Western Suburban League, 105
Greece, 163
Green's, 102
Gregory, Pte E., 176
Greyfriars School, 113
Guards Regiments, 69, 139
Gull, Sir Cameron, 42

Haddrell, Inspector, 64
Haigh, Capt M.C., 148
Haigh, Emily, 96
Haines, Reginald, 204
Hairdressers, 70
Halestrap, William, 97
Haley, William, 96
Hallett, Connie, 40
Hammer, Margaret, 79
Hargan, Eva, 63
Harper, Cpl William, 131
Hart, Flt Sgt W., 184
Harrison, N., 42
Harrison's Chemists, 146, 169
Harvest, 49–50, 86, 127
Haslam, Dryland, 51
Hatton, Richard, 47
Hawkins, C.A., 113
Hay, 49, 123
Haydon, Harry & Emily, 139
Headstone, 106, 111, 155
Health Ministry, 200
Heame, G., 124
Hedgcocks', 83
Heelas, 11, 38, 65, 83, 114, 127, 135, 148, 179, 180–2, 185
Helmsley, Lady, 121
Hemdean House School, 35
Henley, 62, 109, 119
Herbert, Albert, 117
Hertfordshire, 196
Hewitt, Cadet, 124
Hickman Family, 139
Hicks, Elisha, 66
Hicks, John, 129
Hicks, Mrs, 121
Higgins, Fred, 15
Higgs, T., 116
Highgrove Terrace, 47
Hill, Alderman, 168
Hill's, Arthur, 48
HMS:
Britannia, 139
Deppo, 79
Hogarth, Lt, 170
Holder's Nursery, 60
Holland, 98, 104, 146
Holmes, W., 116
Holybrook, 67
Home Front, 15
Hope Street, 59
Hopkins, Ethel, 108
Horses, 25, 47, 50, 77–8, 101, 125, 190
Horticulture/horticultural, 147
Hospital(s):
41 Stationary, 139
Battle (No. 1 War Hospital), 79, 93–4, 101
Christchurch Road VAD, 165
Dreadnought Albert Dock, 169
Katesgrove School (No. 5 War Hospital), 22, 149

Norwich, 139
Park, 31
Radcliffe, 91
RAF, 140
Redlands School (No. 4 War Hospital), 30
Royal Berkshire, 29–30, 77, 91, 108, 149, 159
St Luke's Red Cross, 142
Struan House, 169
Uxbridge Cottage, 140
Weston-super-Mare, 107
Hotel(s), 20, 51, 77, 98, 190
House, Dr, 109
House of Commons, 193, 195–6
House of Lords, 195, 197
Howard, Alderman Stanley, 133
Howard Street, 40
Howarth, 2nd Air Mechanic, 36
Howes, Pte G., 65
Howlett, C., 122
Huggins, Lt Jack, 23
Humphries, Georgina, 77
Hungerford, 62, 112, 127
Hunting, 10, 22, 102, 125, 127
Huntley, Bourne & Stevens, 7, 127, 135, 143, 162, 164
Huntley & Palmers, 7, 13, 30, 33, 37, 56, 93–4, 113, 127, 135, 143, 162, 164, 183
Hurst, 58, 66–7, 209

Ice, 45
Imperial War Graves Commission, 155
Incest, 17, 129
Indecency, 23
Industrial School, 25
Infant(s), 29, 64, 75, 129
Infantry, 201
Influenza, 131–2, 136, 139–41, 156, 200
Ing, Charles, 132
Ingram, Annie, 80
Inman, CSM, DCM, 94
International Labour Peace Conference, 196
International Stores, 12, 76, 85
Internment, 26
Invalid(ed)/invalidity, 8, 58, 65, 140, 169
Ireland/Irish, 44, 97, 191–2, 194, 196–8, 203
Isaacs, H., 116
Italy, 128, 140, 156, 163, 195

Jackson, G.R. Ltd, 133
Jackman, John, 59
Jackson & Sons, 38, 68
Jager, Thomas, 170
Jaggers, Ambrose, 26–7
Jam, 55, 62, 151, 199
Jews, 71
Joel, S., 124
Johns, W.E., 36
Johnson, Pte F.R., DCM, 110
Johnson, Pte W., 34
Jones, Leonard, 41
Josey, Bugler Victor, 159
Josey, F.G., 116
Joynes, Fred, 38

Kaill's fish shop, 59
Kaiser Wilhelm, 134, 179, 188
Katesgrove, 96, 138, 149
Katesgrove School, 22
Kaye, Fred, 80
Kelly, Sgt MM & Bar, 148
Kendall's, 37
Kennetmouth, 60
Kennetside, 27, 63
Kensington Road, 124, 132
Kent, 20, 189–92, 194–6, 198
Kentwood Hill, 150
Kew, Pte, 122
Kew Terrace, 150
Kidmore End, 209
Kidmore End Road, 80

King George, 52–3, 59, 93–5, 121–2, 149, 179, 182, 185, 191–3, 198–9
King William, 141
King's Bounty, 121
King's Certificate, 65
King's Colour, 174
King's Equerry, 95
King's Message, 149, 179
King's Proclamation, 52–3
King's Road, 77
Kipping Hill, 125
Kirby, William & Henry, 97
Kisiclowski, Miss, 115
Kitchener, Lord, 9, 69
Kitchens, 60–1, 75, 109, 147
Kurdistan, 176

Laley, G., 125
Lamps/light(ing), 18–19, 24, 59, 91, 135, 143, 150, 200
Langston, Lt, 144
Lansbury, Mr & Mrs, 25
Lard, 77, 98
Lavender Street, 63
League of Nations, 178, 197, 199
Lee, Lord, 198
Leighton Park, 116, 130
Lentils, 51
Leopold House, 114
Lewendon, Edith, 79
Lewis, Ada, 96
Lewis, Florence, 129
Liebenrood Road, 96
Lime Court, 47
Lincoln, William, 96
Liverpool, 44, 110
Liverpool Road, 141
Lloyd, James, 143
Loader, Edith, 74–5
Local Government Board, 42, 73, 146
Loder-Symonds, 104, 136
Lofthouse, Cpl, 23
London(er), 8, 18, 55, 71, 75–6, 81, 84, 97–9, 108, 110, 119, 121, 130, 132, 142, 153, 188–9, 191–6, 198–200, 204
London Road, 9, 11, 35, 47, 134
London Street, 23, 38, 47, 59
Lott, H.E., 116
Louth, Pte Harold, 144
Lower Armour Road, 150
Lund's Farm, 105
Lyddon, Maj, 144

MacKae-Gibson, Lt, 141
Maddocks, Maud, 142
Magistrates, 23, 46, 55, 63, 80, 89, 101, 109, 177
Maidenhead, 22, 62, 110, 139
Majestic (MV), 185
Major, 2/Lt Cyril, 144
Malta, 20
Manor Farm, 67, 120–1, 146–7, 168
Manpower, 15, 23, 27, 57, 195–7
Maori, 22
Maple Durham, 210
Margarine, 16, 53, 55, 76–7, 97–9, 151, 196
Market Place, 41, 53, 64, 77, 93, 114, 133, 143
Marriage, 28, 117
Marsh, Mr F.W., 60
Martin, Sgt Lionel, 87
Maskell, Esther, 186
Maskell, George, 69
Maule, Gertrude, 121
Maurice, Col W., 136
Maypole Shops, 55, 98
McIlroy Ltd, 82–3, 134, 148, 152
McLaren, Professor, 33
Meals, 51, 53–4, 61, 100, 134, 196
Measles, 29
Meat(s)/types of, 12, 16, 51–3, 55, 61, 76, 81, 97–9, 143–4, 148–9, 151
Memorials, 105, 110, 144, 155–6, 163–5, 174, 185, 187, 202–203
Merry Maidens, 58
Mesopotamia, 128, 163

Messenger(s), 38, 162, 166
Michaelmas, 8
MiD, 144, 148, 162
Military Cross, 105, 139, 144, 148, 156, 163
Military Medal, 88, 93, 136, 144, 148, 154, 160, 162–3
Military Police, 46, 128
Military Service (Bill), 23, 26, 65, 114, 190–1, 194, 197
Milk/milking, 54, 64, 76, 89, 119–20, 125, 130, 194, 199
Millard, Ernest, 64
Miller, F., 46
Mill Lane, 40, 156
Mill Lodge, 43
Miller, Mr F., 46
Millers/milling, 188
Milson, Henry, Kathleen, Edward, Thomas & Nellie, 74
Mines, Pte Walter, 154
Minister of Education, 191
Ministry of Food, 76, 99, 109
Ministry of Information, 196
Ministry of Munitions, 23, 27, 166, 198
Ministry of National Service, 190, 194
Ministry of Reconstruction, 193
Money, 8–9, 11, 13, 16, 18, 20–2, 29–31, 40–1, 46, 50, 56, 60–2, 65, 67, 78–9, 81–2, 84, 89, 93, 101, 103, 124, 127, 130, 142–3, 148–9, 177
Montague Street, 139
Moody, Henry, 35
Moore, William, 113
Morris, Leonard, 155
Mortimer, 11, 210
Moss, Pte Charles, 146
Motor ambulance, 22
Motor bus, 106
Motor car(s), 15, 48, 59, 154
Motor garage, 146
Motor mechanics, 120
Motor van(s), 119, 135
Mount, Hilda, 137
Mount Pleasant, 97
Mourning, 105, 132
Mount Street, 55
MSM, 34, 162–3
Mundesley Street, 47
Murder, 17, 29, 75, 109, 129, 153

Nash, Alfred, 129
National Anthem, 16, 93, 134, 178
National Relief Fund, 14, 57
Naval and Army Canteen Board, 113, 154
Newbury, 58, 62, 75, 112, 123, 127
Newspapers, 6, 8, 10–12, 15–18, 30, 33, 43, 47, 58, 60, 69, 78, 83, 99, 110, 112, 137, 139, 141, 146, 149, 153, 170, 173, 203
New Town Gardens, 109
New Year, 9–10, 14, 18, 23, 84, 91, 103, 143, 150–1
New York, 132
Nobel Peace Prize, 194
Norfolk, 104, 191
Norfolk Road, 14
Norris, William, 15
North, George, 59
Northcourt Avenue, 96
Northumberland Avenue, 97
Norwich, 139
Nurse(s), 122, 124, 134
Nursery(ies), 19–20, 60, 121, 147

Oats, 40, 50, 54, 190–1
Obscenity/obscene, 47, 59
Observer (The), 8
Offal, 144, 200
Onions, 12, 124
Orts Road, 121
Osier, 8
Owen, Wilfred, 8
Oxford(shire), 62, 91
Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, 201

Oxfordshire Heavy RGA, 105
Oxford Road, 35, 38, 47, 59, 63, 112, 119, 129, 132–3, 168
Oxford Street, 38
Oxley, Stanley, 104

Palmer Park, 27, 70, 139, 182, 184
Palmer Park Avenue, 139
Palmer, Sir Walter, 168
Pangbourne Street, 59
Paper, 47, 56–7, 60, 76, 99, 104, 127, 163
Parker, Sgt John, 69
Park Place, 185
Parliament(ary), 46, 137–8, 193–4, 200
Patriot(ism), 17, 45, 48, 93, 160, 171, 179
Paul, Les, 44
Peace (Day), 16, 31, 58, 84, 91, 134, 149, 151, 176, 178–9, 181–6, 188, 192, 195, 200–201
Pearce, L., 125
Peas, 50–1
Pegs Green Lane, 101
Pendlebury, Herbert & Ada, 156
Peppard War Memorial, 155
Perks, D., 132
Persia, 163, 176
Perus, Karl, 26
Peterborough, 67
Petrol, 48, 58, 77, 190, 194
Phillips, PC, 119
Pierce, P/Sgt, 26
Piggotts Road, 186
Pilgrim, Ada, 55
Pipes (smoking), 30
Pitot, 2/Lt Maurice, 139
Play Hatch, 69
Pleurisy, 29
Plummer, Alfred, 63–4
Plum Puddings, 149
Pneumonia, 29, 136, 139–40, 156, 168
Police, 15, 19, 23, 25–28, 31, 40–1, 46–7, 56, 60, 63–4, 71–2, 75, 78, 96, 109, 119–20, 128–9, 135, 186, 196, 199–200
Political Prisoners, 45
Portholme Aerodrome Ltd, 57
Post Office, 16, 26, 82, 117, 148, 160, 162
Potatoes, 12, 16, 47, 51, 54–5, 101, 147
Pott, Elsie, 129
Poulton, Cllr, 136
Poultry, 51–3, 90, 144, 149, 159
Povey, Pte Horace, 114
Powell, Pte L.C., 43
Powell, PC, 88
Prince of Wales, 199
Prisoners of War, 19, 26, 78–9, 86, 88, 92, 96–7, 104, 106, 122–3, 130, 134, 137, 144, 146, 151–2, 155, 156, 159, 164, 194, 198, 200
Prospect Park, 100, 178, 181–2
Prussian Guard, 78–9
Pryce, Capt Thomas, VC, MC, 139
Pulsometer Company, 164

Queen Mary, 93, 95, 101, 122, 149, 182, 185, 192–3
Queen Victoria Nursing Institute, 155
Queen Victoria's Statue, 134
Queen's Cottages, 65
Queen's Head, 148
Queen's Road, 75, 140
Queue(s)/ing, 52, 54–5, 77, 98–9, 102, 132, 195

Rabbits, 50–1, 98–9, 144
Radstock Road, 11
Railway(s), 8, 27, 35, 81, 104, 119–20, 159, 167, 171, 199–200
Rain, 9, 114, 135, 150, 178, 183, 185
RAF, 92, 107, 121, 124, 130, 139–41, 163
Randall, James, 59

Rationing, 17, 48, 51, 54, 76, 77, 98, 100, 102, 151–3, 195–7, 200
Rats, 50
Reading:
  Board of Education, 19
  Board of Governors, 177
  Board of Guardians, 148
  Borough, 7, 27, 29, 47, 54, 55, 88, 132, 137, 153, 168, 178
  Boys' School, 8
  Cemetery, 79, 112
  Chamber of Commerce, 31, 39, 51
  Council, 7, 14, 19, 27, 30–1, 50, 54, 61, 68, 73, 96, 100, 105, 116–18, 120, 146–7, 168
  County Bench, 23, 41, 55, 63, 74–5, 81, 96–7, 121, 142, 154, 170, 177
  Education Authority/Committee, 35, 60, 116–17
  Food Control Commission, 102
  Gaol, 44–5, 78, 97
  Gas Company/Works, 48, 57, 74, 141
  Health, 19, 26–7, 29, 42–3, 108–109, 122, 140, 142, 149, 182, 200
  Highways 18, 24–5, 31
  Library(ies), 84, 139, 150–1, 155
  Licensed victuallers, 45, 88
  Market, 81, 90, 97–8, 166
  Market Place, 41, 53, 64, 77, 93, 114, 133, 143, 176
  Mayor, 16, 53, 60, 63, 74, 95, 104, 121–2, 127, 133–5, 168, 170–3, 176, 178–80, 183, 185
  Mercury, 8, 133
  National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers, 131
  Standard, 8, 14, 144
  Station, 8, 71, 81, 93, 112, 116, 161, 170–2, 175
  Trades & Labour Council, 40
  Trade(s) Union(s), 77, 119, 193
  Town Council, 27, 31, 68, 100
  Town Hall, 16, 32, 35–6, 53, 63, 82, 91, 93, 96, 99, 159, 170–4, 179–80, 183
  Trams, 86, 90, 117, 135, 142
  Tribunals, 15, 39, 42, 113, 116
  Watch Committee, 31, 91
Recreation Grounds, 9, 122, 185
Recruits/Recruiting/Recruitment, 14, 33, 39, 58, 110, 112, 114, 125–6, 189, 192, 194
Red Cross, 20, 30, 45, 59, 124, 127–8, 159, 169, 199
Redlands Road, 37, 107
Redlands Ward, 138
Reformatory School, 23, 25, 62, 130
Refugees, 92, 108, 156
Remount Depot, 122
Repatriation, 137, 143
Reservists, 26
Rhondda, Lord, 192, 195–6
Rice, 51, 54
Richmond, 65
Rider, Elsie, 141
Rifles, 79
River Kennet, 8–10, 27, 45, 109
River Loddon, 9–10, 45
RNAS, 67, 197
Robbins, Miss H., 114
Robinson, Ellen, 80
Robinson, Helen, 129
Robinson, James, 80–1
Rockley, 125
Rogers, James, 25
Roll of Honour, 33, 105, 139, 144, 156, 160, 162, 165
Romania, 163, 176
Rose Kiln Lane, 147
Royal Berkshire Regiment:
  Regular Battalions, 94, 114, 123, 135, 137, 159, 161, 170–3, 176, 185, 191–2, 195, 197–8, 201
  Service Battalions, 9, 22, 33, 35,

43–4, 65, 69, 114, 137, 139, 144, 173–5, 190–3, 195–9, 201
Territorials, 9, 87, 114, 156, 170–1, 189, 193, 195, 197
Tobacco fund, 30, 78, 103
Royal Flying Corps, 8, 35–6, 65–6, 92, 96–7, 101, 107, 197
Royal Navy, 98, 143, 203
Rundle, L/Cpl, 128
Russia(n), 11, 36, 71, 163, 176, 189, 192, 195, 199
Rye, 50, 54

Sackley, Emily, 47
Sago, 51
Salary(ies), 13, 29–31, 118, 134
Sales/Selling, 15, 20, 46, 53–4, 75, 81, 98, 108, 130, 143, 154, 191
Sales (The), 68, 83, 151, 152
Salisbury Road, 140
Salmon, Messrs, 113
Salmon, Prof, 80
Salonika, 20, 22, 78, 128
Salt, Mrs, 122
Salvation Army, 92
Sanger, Lord John, 11
Sausages, 52, 98, 144
Scarborough, 193
Schneiders, Albert, 107
School of Military Aeronautics, 8, 36, 107–108, 124–5, 165
School of Technical Training, 36–7
School(s), 7–8, 10, 19, 23, 25, 31, 35–7, 45, 48, 60–2, 68, 73–4, 84, 90, 107, 113, 116–18, 124–5, 130, 132, 136, 144, 147, 151, 163–5, 171, 174, 182, 202
Scotch, 64
Scotland, 9, 20, 203
Serbia, 22, 163
Serpell's, 143
Sex, 63, 129
Shefford, 125
Shell(s), 8, 35, 44, 56, 69, 78, 87, 130, 132, 164, 188–9, 191, 193, 196, 198
Shepherds Hill House, 9, 106
Sherwood, A.H., 178
Shinfield, 9, 50, 101, 210
Shinfield Road, 168
Shiplake, 211
Sidmouth Street, 35
Silver, 20, 67, 122
Silver, Mrs, 121–2
Silver Street, 47, 81, 88, 153
Silvertown, 188
Silver War Badge, 65
Silver Wedding, 122, 198
Simmonds, Frank, Alice, Kathleen and Mercy, 73–4
Simonds, 7, 42, 134, 152, 171, 184
Simonds, J., 134
Simpson, Florence & Joseph, 129
Sindlesham, 211
Sinfield, John, 129
Sinn Fein, 44–5, 97, 192, 198
Slade, Cpl, 122
Slatter, Cpl Percy, 105
Slough, 119
Smart, George, 140
Smith, Annie, 110, 129
Smith, Bessie, 63
Smith, F., 39
Smith, George, 47
Smith, Miss J.M., 115
Smith, Pte Sydney, 35
Smith, Sgt S., 176
Snow, 9, 40, 45, 90
Snowflake Laundry, 95
Socialists, 58, 193
Sol Joel, 124
Somme, 16, 69
Sonning, 43, 211
Sonning Common, 212
Sonning Eye, 203
Soup, 51, 54, 144
Southcote, 7
Southcote Road, 136
South Eastern Railway, 8, 81

Southampton, 66, 173
Southampton Street, 43, 60–1, 88, 146
Southern League, 11
South Street, 80
Sparks, Mrs, 121
Sparrows, 50
Special Constables, 26, 31, 88
Spencers Wood, 186
Spice, Mr, 124
Spirits, 64–5, 90
Sport(s), 69–70, 122, 124, 148, 151, 155, 191
Spot, the dog, 20
Spring, 86, 114, 151
St Bennet's Home, 25
St George's Road, 136
St John's, 88
St Laurence's, 171, 176
St Mary's, 68
St Mary the Virgin, 33, 41, 112
St Peter's Church, Earley, 18, 69, 82, 111, 187, 203
St Saviour's Church, 155
St Stephen's Church, 88
St Stephen's House, 28
Stevens & Co., 48
Stevens, J., 154
Stevens, W.J., 38
Stewart, Robert, 154
Still, Edward, 25
Stott, Sir Douglas, 117
Straughton, Daisy, 186
Submarines, 16, 188
Suet, 51, 144
Suffolk, 188, 191–2
Suffrage/Suffragists, 19, 190, 195
Sugar, 12, 48, 51–2, 54–5, 61–2, 68, 76, 97, 99, 151, 190, 195, 197, 200
Suicide, 15, 24, 26, 29, 35, 64–5, 117
Summer, 11, 36, 48–9, 55, 67–8, 86, 90, 102, 116, 121, 143, 194
Sumpter, Sgt W.H., MM, 148
Sunday School, 68
Supper, 11, 52, 82, 171
Surrey Road, 128
Sutton, Lt Alexander, 104
Sutton, Arthur, 94
Sutton, Lt Eric, 104
Sutton, Lt Eustace, 104–105
Sutton, Leonard, 136
Sutton, Lt William, 104
Sutton's, 133
Suttons Seeds, 7, 104, 147
Swallowfield, 44, 50, 58, 107, 186, 212
Swallowfield Mill, 50
Swallowfield Parish Council, 50
Swansea Road Council School, 116
Swansea Terrace, 150
Swede, 54
Swimming, 48, 124, 163
Switzerland, 86, 194, 196
Symons, Pte John, 15

Tapioca, 51
Targett, Lt, 156
Tarrant Monkton, 140
Taylor, Elsie, 92
Tax, 82, 153, 188, 191, 194, 197
Tea, 12, 40, 52–4, 68, 70, 76–7, 82, 97–8, 102, 113, 124, 143, 173, 185
Teachers/Teaching, 19, 23, 35, 56, 99, 117, 136, 163, 165
Templer, Brig Gen C.F., 144
Territorials, 113
Thames, river, 8–9, 27, 60, 65, 67, 90, 124, 183, 185, 192
Thames Conservancy Board, 27
Thanksgiving Day, 176
Thatcham, 8, 112
Theale, 116, 124, 212
Thompson, Miss, 126
Thompson. Pte, 154
Thorn Street, 74, 185
Three Mile Cross, 9, 202
Tilehurst, 7, 11, 35, 137–8, 185, 213
Tilehurst Road, 114

Tilehurst Water Company, 150
Tipping, Mrs Kate, 46
Tobacco, 30, 78, 97, 102–103, 116, 148
Town, Beatrice and Nelson, 63
Trade Unions, 42, 200
Training, 8–9, 23, 26–7, 36–7, 69, 104, 108, 165
Trains, 119, 167, 173
Tram conductors, 25
Treating, 46
Tubb, Mr, 122
Tuberculosis, 15, 29, 35
TUC, 193
Tudor Road, 109
Tulloch, Brig Gen J.A.S., 144
Turkey (bird), 82, 149
Turkey/Turks, 159, 163, 176
Twyford, 26, 106, 119, 213
Tyrell, Clara, 140

Ukraine, 176
Underclothing, 104
University College, 8, 23, 27, 30, 33, 35, 80, 108, 118, 164, 165
University College Munitions School, 118
Unpatriotic, 62
Upper Crown Street, 65
Upper Redlands Road, 36, 124
Uxbridge, 140

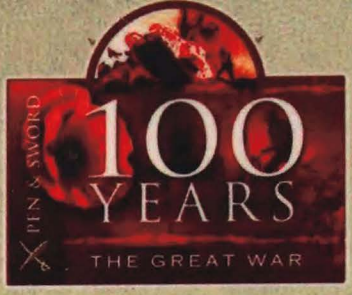
Vagrancy, 24, 62
Vastern Road, 9, 154
Vegetables, 76, 104, 122, 147
Venereal Disease, 31, 91
Venner & Sons, 89, 160
Victoria Cross, 44, 156
Victory Loan, 129, 176
Vincent's Garage, 77, 167
Vockins, RSM, 176
Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD), 20, 51, 82, 91, 114, 124, 169, 183
Volunteer(s), 26, 65, 112, 113, 159, 201
Volunteer Motor Squadron, 58

Wages, 8, 10, 13, 16, 30, 31, 41–2, 95–6, 117, 120–1, 141, 166, 191, 199
Waite, Rupert, 204
Waite, Willliam, 69
Waldeck Street, 97
Waldron, Sgt Maj E.T., 34
Wales, 20, 46, 64, 199, 203
Wantage, 58, 127
Wantage Hall, 36
War Bonus, 13, 31, 40–1, 74, 86, 120–1, 199
Ward, Gnr Arthur, 156
Warfield, 58
Wargrave, 58, 75, 213
War Hospitals, 16, 20, 36, 82, 134, 149
War Hospitals Care and Comforts Committee, 82
War Hospitals Supplies Depot, 20, 67
War Loan, 56, 110, 176, 188–9, 194, 199
Warner, Capt P.F., 124
War Office, 105, 140, 192
Wasing Place, 137
Waterloo Street, 9
Waterworks, 31, 57, 117, 150
Watlington, 71
Watlington Street, 142, 203
Weather, 9, 14, 45, 69, 77, 90, 124
Wedding(s), 54, 122, 141, 198
Welch, L/Cpl, VC, 44
Weldale Street, 59, 80
Wellman, Charlotte, 35
Wenmon, William, 69
Western Front, 34, 122
West Street, 80, 149
Wheat, 16, 48, 50–1, 54, 188, 190
Wheeler Bros., 160
Wheeler, Mrs, 121
Whippets, 96, 148
Whisky, 65, 154

Whist, 11, 82, 149
Whitaker, 2/Lt, 130
White, Cynthia, 186
White, Pte, 35
Whiteaway, Henry, 71
Whitley, 7, 34, 59, 137, 140, 174, 214
Whitley Avenue, 91
Whitley Knoll, 59
Whitley Street, 97
Wiggins, Henry, 153
Wigmore Lane, 35
Wild, Arthur, 25
Wilder, W., 69
Wilkins, Albert, 59
Williams, Miss, 117
Willoughby, Mrs, 122
Willoughby, William, 204
Wilson, Lt Col, MP, 138, 174, 176, 178
Wilson, President, 188
Wilton Road, 114
Winch, Cyril, 107
Wind, 9, 14
Windows, 19, 59, 104, 119
Windsor, 7, 26, 154, 192
Wine(s), 64, 149
Winter, 9, 14, 75, 79, 90, 121–2, 130, 139
Winter, Cllr, 134
Winter, Mrs, 122
Withers, Cpl, A.G. MiD, 148
Withnall, Herbert, 140
Wokingham, 27, 46, 62–3, 75, 139, 156, 180
Wokingham Road, 136
Wokingham Road Senior School, 136
Wolseley Street, 73
Women, 10, 12, 14, 19–21, 23, 27–8, 30–1, 37, 42, 58, 63–6, 77, 91–2, 96, 114–15, 117, 125–6, 134, 137–9, 148, 165–6, 179, 188–90, 195, 197, 199–200
Women's:
  Auxiliary Army Corps, 66, 96, 114, 189–90, 197
  Forage Corps, 21, 123
  Land Army, 21, 115, 123, 126
  Police, 28, 200
  Royal Air Force, 197
  Royal Naval Service, 195
  Scottish Hospital, 195
  Volunteers, 112
Wood, 77, 168
Wood, Mrs, 122
Woodhay, 112
Woodley, 105–106, 140, 168, 214
Woodstock, 62
Wool, 56, 86
Wright, Richard, 60

Yapp, Sir Arthur, 194
Yarmouth, 195
Yeomanry House, 179
YMCA, 92–3, 125, 127–8, 139, 162–4
York Road, 35, 61, 74
Yorkshire, 194
Yorkshire Regiment, 204
Youlton, Elsie, 40
Young, Dr, 60

Zeppelin, 11, 189, 191–4, 196–7, 199



READING IN THE GREAT WAR 1917-1919 looks at life in an important industrial and agricultural town in the south of England. The book charts the changes that occurred in ordinary people's lives, some caused by the war, some of their own doing.

On the surface Reading was a calm town that got on with its business – beer, biscuits, metalwork, seeds and armaments – but its poverty impacted on industrial relations leading to strikes. It was also a God-fearing, hard-working and sober town. However, underneath it had a darker side, all of it exposed in this book: drunkenness, desertion, suicide, child abuse, murder, double murder and underage sex; it was all there, happening when eyes where not watching.

This is a book about human relationships: to each other and the outside world, warts and all. It is a telling account of the human tragedies and triumphs of a nation at war and the day-to-day preoccupations of a community attempting to find normality in a reality so far removed from anything they had ever known. Including over 100 unique and rarely seen illustrations and expertly written by a prolific author, this is an enriching read for anybody wishing take a glimpse beneath the surface of life on Reading's home front.

David Bilton is a retired teacher who spends his time looking after his family, working as a University lecturer and researching the Great War. He is the prolific author of numerous books about the British Army, the Home Front and the German Army. His first book, *The Hull Pals*, became the B[illegible]ies *The Trench*. Since he started writing he has contributed to many tele[illegible]nd radio programmes. His interest in the Great War was ignited by his gra[illegible]r's refusal to talk about his experiences in Gallipoli and on the Western

£12.99

Cover design:
Jon Wilkinson